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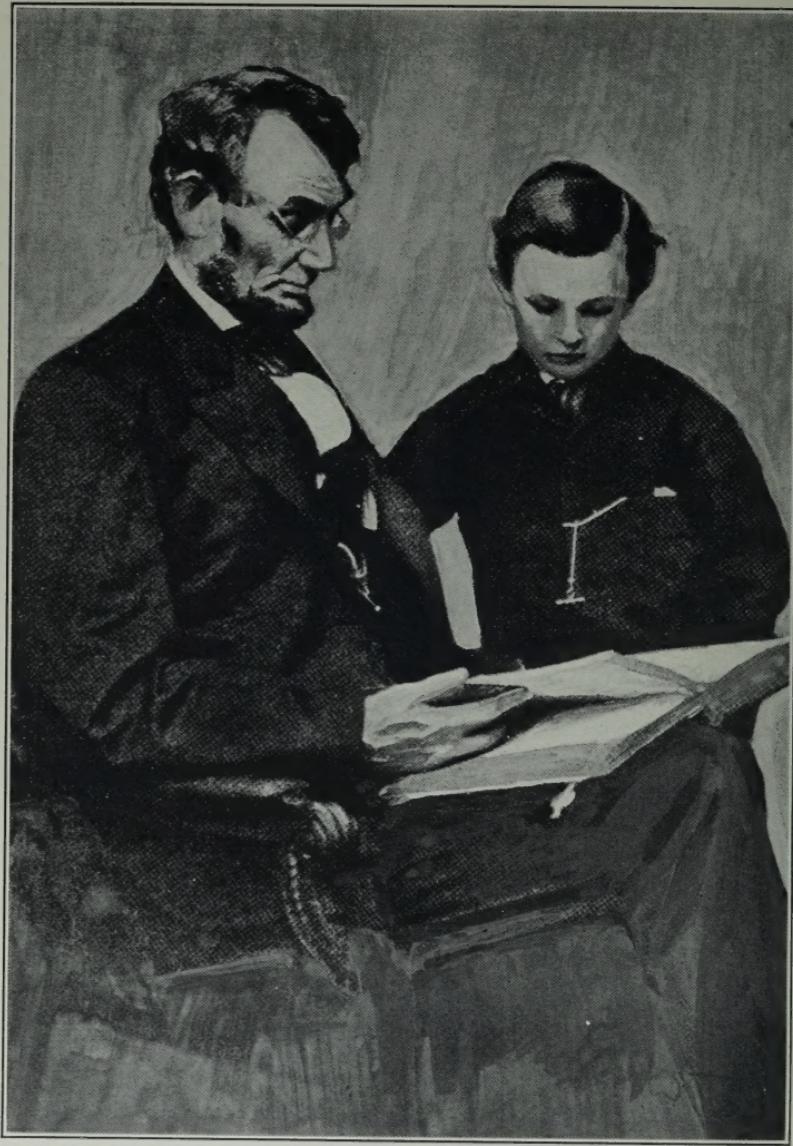
ABRAHAM LINCOLN  
—*For Boys and Girls*—

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Abraham Lincoln and his son Thomas (Tad).

# ABRAHAM LINCOLN

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*For Boys and Girls*

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BY  
**ALBERT BRITT**  
PRESIDENT OF KNOX COLLEGE

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## TABLE of CONTENTS

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CHAPTER		PAGE
I	A SON OF THE WILDERNESS . . . . .	11
II	LEARNING TO WORK . . . . .	23
III	HE COMES OF AGE . . . . .	32
IV	EARLY DAYS IN ILLINOIS . . . . .	38
V	LINCOLN KEEPS A COUNTRY STORE . . . . .	44
VI	LINCOLN AS A SOLDIER . . . . .	49
VII	ODD JOBS FOR A LIVING . . . . .	55
VIII	LINCOLN IN THE LEGISLATURE . . . . .	66
IX	HE GOES TO CONGRESS . . . . .	79
X	FOLLOWING THE COURT . . . . .	96
XI	SLAVERY COMES TO THE FRONT . . . . .	115
XII	LINCOLN DEBATES WITH DOUGLAS . . . . .	124
XIII	HE IS ELECTED PRESIDENT . . . . .	141
XIV	THE WAR BEGINS . . . . .	154
XV	LINCOLN AND THE SOLDIERS . . . . .	178
XVI	LOOKING FOR A MAN . . . . .	187
XVII	LINCOLN IS ELECTED AGAIN . . . . .	202
XVIII	THE END OF THE WAR . . . . .	207
XIX	THE FOURTEENTH OF APRIL . . . . .	214
XX	THE LESSONS OF LINCOLN . . . . .	231



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## ILLUSTRATIONS

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Abraham Lincoln and his son Thomas . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
The log cabin in which Lincoln was born . . . . .	18
Lincoln reading before the log fire . . . . .	24
Lincoln at the age of thirty-seven . . . . .	76
Statue of Lincoln by St. Gaudens . . . . .	82
Lincoln as a rail splitter . . . . .	138
Old portrait of Mary Todd Lincoln . . . . .	142
The stepmother of Lincoln . . . . .	150
Lincoln at the age of fifty-two . . . . .	154
Lincoln and his Cabinet . . . . .	176



ABRAHAM LINCOLN  
—*For Boys and Girls*—

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## CHAPTER I

### A SON OF THE WILDERNESS

THE greatest name in American history is that of Abraham Lincoln. There is no doubt about that. He was a great President at a time when the country needed courage, wisdom and patience. He had all these.

He was born of poor parents in the midst of a wilderness and he rose from this to the highest position that the American people can offer. He was self-taught and yet he was one of the best educated men of his time. He had learned that the only knowledge that counts is the knowledge we can use and he studied hard at those things that would lift him above the level on which he was born.

Let us see what America was like in that far-away day when he came into the world. When Abraham Lincoln was born in a log cabin in Hardin County (now LaRue County), Kentucky, the Constitution of the United States was only twenty-one years old. It was not more than thirty-three years since the

Declaration of Independence had been signed at Philadelphia.

Before that time, this country of ours that now stretches from Ocean to Ocean and has a population of over one hundred and fifteen million people, the most powerful and richest nation on the earth, was a narrow fringe of colonies along the Atlantic Coast. Great Britain owned them and managed them for her own profit.

The War of the Revolution had cost the scattered settlements heavily in men and money, but they had learned the hard lessons of independence. They had paid dearly for the freedom they had gained, and men put a high value on things they have won at a high price. Another lesson they had learned was the value of land.

When the Revolutionary War was ended, the United States consisted only of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.

West of the Allegheny and Blue Ridge Mountains was a tremendous continent ready for the taking. This region that stretched from the Allegheny Mountains to the Pacific Ocean contained the terri-

tory out of which thirty-three states were presently to be made. These, with the thirteen original colonies and Maine, Vermont and West Virginia, make up the United States of America as we know it to-day. Only the Indians and the wild beasts roamed the wide stretches of this Western country. As soon as they had won their freedom from England, the Americans began to turn their attention to this new territory.

In Kentucky, a man named Daniel Boone had already begun to lead hunters and afterwards settlers into the new territory. Daniel Boone was one of the greatest of backwoodsmen and Indian fighters.

Wherever the white man and the Indian came together, there was war. The whites wanted to clear away the forests, plow the soil, build houses and towns. The Indians claimed the land for themselves. They lived by hunting and they soon saw that the white man drove the game out of the forests. They fought the white man to keep the land for themselves and their children, and the white man fought for a place to make a home for his family.

Probably no man ever lived who was better fitted than Boone to lead his people along such a hard road as that which their feet now pressed. On foot and on horseback they plodded through the passes

in the Blue Ridge Mountains from Virginia and North Carolina into Kentucky. The road was called The Wilderness Road, but it was nothing like what we would call a road to-day. Path would be a better word for it. In many places it was only wide enough for men or horses to go in single file and nowhere could even a rude cart travel it. It was twenty years after it was first used before the first wheel passed over this wilderness highway into the promised land.

This is not the place to tell of the long Indian wars, the massacres, and the heroic struggles that were necessary before white men had made the country safe. After the Revolution was over, the tide of restless settlers and hunters moving westward increased. And among the travelers was one named Abraham Lincoln. He was the grandfather of the man we are telling about, the man who was later to be the greatest of all our long list of great men.

Little is known about the first Lincolns. The earliest record we find of the name in this country is in Massachusetts about 1635. There were Lincolns in that colony almost from the beginning. A General Lincoln from Massachusetts fought bravely in the Revolution. Students of history have traced the

movement of various Lincolns westward into Pennsylvania, then into Virginia, and finally into Kentucky. They were weavers, blacksmiths, farmers, and all of them seem to have been restless and uneasy wherever they were.

One historian declares that he followed the history of the Lincolns for six generations, and each generation had its pioneers. They fought Indians and wild beasts. They tamed the wilderness and built their homes out of the great trees that stood thick all over Eastern America. Then as soon as neighbors appeared they moved on to a new wilderness and a new fight.

The story of America for nearly the first hundred years of its history is a story of a frontier always moving westward. And the Lincolns were somewhere out in front until well along in the last century.

The conditions into which the future President was born were harder and cruder than it is possible to imagine to-day. None of the conveniences that we accept as a matter of course were in existence. It was twenty years after his birth before the first railroad was built in America. Robert Fulton had launched his first steamboat on the Hudson only two years before.

The telephone, the telegraph, the electric light

were undreamed of. Few of the settlers could read and write; books and newspapers existed only for the educated few in the larger towns. Thomas Lincoln, Abraham's father, never learned to read and it was not until he was well along in years that he learned to write his own name. On the few occasions when it was necessary for him to sign a paper of any kind he had someone else more skillful write his name and he "made his mark"—like this:

his  
THOMAS      X      LINCOLN  
mark

This was a binding signature and was recognized by the courts as good on contracts, deeds, or any other kind of document.

There was little encouragement to anyone to learn to read in that primitive time. The young government had made little provision for carrying or delivering mail. Postage stamps had not been invented and postage was paid when a letter was received. Frequently it cost as much as fifty cents or a dollar to send a letter from Boston to New York, where now two cents will carry it across the continent, or even across the Ocean to England.

The settlers in the wilderness made practically everything they used in their daily lives. Cabins

were far apart, and there were no stores or shops except crude affairs in the small settlements, where were sold only the barest necessities of life. Nothing existed like our great department stores, delivering purchases from door to door. Even in the larger towns people went to market and carried what they had bought home in a basket. In the wilderness they made practically everything themselves. They had no money and when they wanted something they could not make themselves, they traded for it the skins of wild beasts or something else they had won out of the forest.

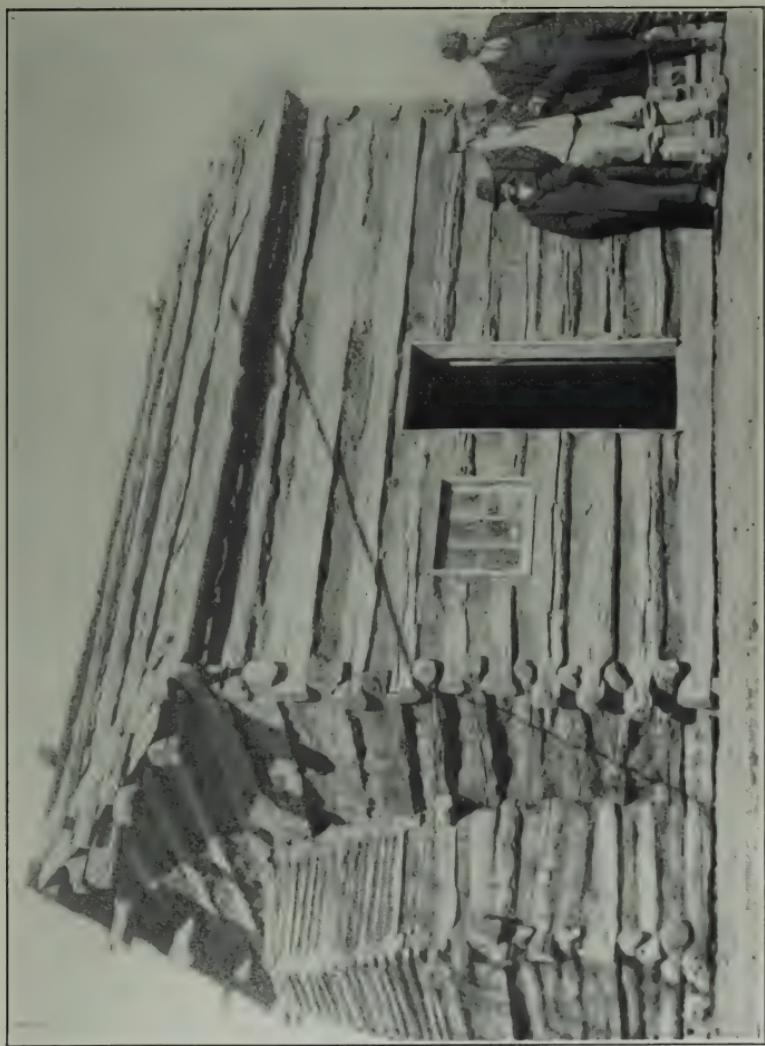
Their clothing was made from cloth that they wove themselves from wool clipped from the backs of sheep that they had reared. Frequently, they made it from the skins of deer, bear, raccoon, and beaver. Young Abraham undoubtedly wore a coon-skin cap, moccasins of deer hide, and breeches and coat of home-made wool or deerskin. They ground their own meal and flour for bread which they baked in the ashes of the open fire. If they wanted sugar, they tapped maple trees and boiled the sap to syrup and sugar. If they could not do this, they went without. In some places in the remote parts of the South, the poorer people still use molasses instead of sugar and call it "long sweetening." Fortunately the coun-

try abounded in game and as long as they were able to buy gunpowder and lead for their long rifles, they were in no great danger of starving.

Thomas Lincoln was a poor man even in a country where there were no luxuries and everyone lived a life that we would call wretched to-day. His wife struggled to give her children more comforts and some desire for a better life. She was poorly educated, but she had ambition and she strove to teach her children things that would help them to live better. Unfortunately, she was too frail for the hardships that the pioneer's wife must endure and she soon gave up the fight.

The father was of the breed of pioneers who always believed that there is better luck somewhere else. In 1816, when young Abraham was seven years old, his father packed up his few miserable household goods and moved on to the still newer country of Indiana. At this time there were two children in the family, Abraham and his elder sister Sarah. A younger child had died soon after it was born.

The first stop in Indiana was near little Pigeon Creek, about fifteen miles north of the Ohio River which is the line between Indiana and Kentucky. In spite of the fact that the whole state was densely wooded and all that was needed to build a comfortable



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The log cabin in which Abraham Lincoln was born, at Hodgenville, Kentucky



cabin was an axe and a pair of strong arms, the elder Lincoln stopped when his work was only three-quarters done. The first winter, in fact, most of the first year in Indiana, was spent in what hunters call an open-faced camp. That is, it was nothing but a shed with a back and side walls and roof.

The fire was built on the ground, and the smoke drifted out of the open side when the wind permitted. The bunks for sleeping were made by driving stakes in the ground and laying poles across. On this crude platform leaves were spread as a poor substitute for a mattress and the furs of wild animals were used for covering. It was such a shed as the farmer of to-day might use as a shelter for his stock. And yet it was here that a future President of the United States passed the tenth year of his life.

This privation and exposure were too much for the slender strength of his mother. Before they had been many months in Indiana, she sickened and died. There was no one but Thomas Lincoln and one or two neighbors to bury her, not even a minister to say a brief prayer. Months afterwards a wandering preacher was brought to the rude mound that covered her and there was a simple ceremony over her.

There has been much argument about the influence that Lincoln's mother had on him. It is too late to

settle that now. Probably she taught him and his older sister what she knew of Bible stories and fairy tales. Few as they might be, and probably were, she must have had a share in starting him right along the hard road of study. The stories that she told him of David and Goliath, Ruth and Boaz, Samson, Job, and Daniel, are still among the greatest stories that we can find.

Of schooling the Lincoln children had little enough. In Kentucky and Indiana, one hundred years ago, there were few schoolhouses and even fewer teachers. Travelers through the country in that time have told of the noise that they heard from the cabins that served as schoolhouses. It was the habit of that day to permit the scholars to read aloud for a time, probably to break the monotony of the long sessions. Also it helped the teacher to be sure that his scholars were studying.

The result was a babel of tongues, each little scholar reading something different. It was not such a bad idea either. If you have never tried reading aloud, take it up some day. There is no easier way to learn the real meaning of a book. Such schools were sometimes called "blab" schools. The dictionary will tell you that to "blab" is to talk loudly or carelessly.

Probably Lincoln had little more than a year of schooling in all. This does not mean, however, that he had only a year of study. For him the habit of study, once formed, was never given up. Those of us who live in this time of comfort, with electric lights, comfortable chairs and desks, can have little idea of the difficulties with which young Lincoln struggled. The schoolhouse was usually a cabin that no one had other use for. Seats were made by driving stakes into the ground and placing rough slabs of wood on them. If the cabin happened to be floored with slabs, benches were made by boring holes into each corner of a slab and driving long pegs into them. All the seats were of the same height, and the smallest children had to dangle their legs several inches above the floor in the long hours of study.

The teachers were usually young men who were earning a few dollars while waiting to find something better to do. There were no women teachers. The pioneers believed that the work of women was taking care of the family, knitting, weaving, curing the skins of the animals that were to serve as covering, preparing food. There was little difference between the work of the pioneer wife and mother and that of the Indian squaws. No one dreamed then of women voting or of the army of women and girls that are to be

seen working in offices, stores, and shops in our own day.

What reports we have of the young Lincoln show that he was a good student, hungry to learn. We can picture him lying on the floor in front of the open fire in his cabin studying out words in the few books that he could get his hands on. Arithmetic he learned by doing his sums on the smooth back of a wooden shovel, making the figures with a bit of charcoal raked out of the fire. When the shovel was covered with sums that he had done, he would shave it clean and start again.

## CHAPTER II

### LEARNING TO WORK

**T**HREE was little chance of idleness for small boys and girls in a pioneer family. All work was done by hand, and there were tasks for the youngest. Hardly had they learned to walk than they began to learn, too, the hard lessons of work. Young Lincoln at seven was given an axe and hoe and put to work to help his father clear the ground for their new Indiana home.

It was an exciting adventure for the boy. On the long journey from their home, in Kentucky, he had crossed the largest river he had ever seen, the Ohio, and was now in the midst of a great forest filled with game. Deer grazed in the clearings and there were black bear in the swamps along the streams. When nuts and berries ripened they were to be found in the upland woods. Wild turkeys were so thick that one early settler declared they seemed like one great flock, and in the spring and fall ducks and geese abounded in every water course.

A year after his mother died a piece of good for-

tune happened to the Lincoln family. Thomas Lincoln went back to Kentucky and married again. The new mother was a widow, Sally Bush Johnston, with three children, John, Sarah, and Matilda. There have been many stories told about hard-hearted stepmothers and their cruelty to the children of the families into which they have come. None of these would apply to Abraham's new mother. She brought two things into the Lincoln home of which they had great need—energy and household comforts. She had so much furniture that a four-horse team was required to haul it to the new home.

Here is the list: "one fine bureau, one table, one set of chairs, one large clothes-chest, cooking utensils, knives, forks, bedding, and other articles." Simple as these things seem to us, they were luxuries for the Lincoln children, so lately living and sleeping in their camp home.

Undoubtedly she brought great encouragement for the young Abraham wrestling with his scanty books by the fire after a hard day's work in the woods. When there are not half a dozen books within a day's journey, the few volumes that are to be had are valued far beyond our power to understand to-day. One experience of Lincoln's shows this clearly. He had borrowed a copy of Weems's *Life of Washington*



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Lincoln reading before the log fire as a boy



from a neighbor. The only place he could find to keep the book safe was in a crack between the logs of the cabin. Rain in the night soaked some of the leaves of the book. Much disturbed in mind, he carried it back to the owner and offered to work until he had paid for the damage. The owner of the book set him at work pulling fodder. At the end of three days he owned the book, the first that he had ever been able to call his own. And you may be sure that he knew the value of that tattered volume.

Look for a moment at the list of books that he read in these log cabin days after he had earned a few minutes' leisure in the evening: the Bible, *Æsop's Fables*, *Robinson Crusoe*, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, a *History of the United States*, Weems's *Life of Washington*. Later on he read a copy of the *Revised Statutes* of the State of Indiana.

None of these can be called light reading for a child, but out of each one he took something that was to be of value to him. It would be hard to say how much he owed to these great books for his ability to speak and write the simple direct English for which he was to be known in the days of his world-wide fame. His case proves that education comes not from the number of books we read, but from the careful study of a few great ones.

This study was a very small part of Lincoln's life. There were logs to be cut for buildings, fences, and firewood. Ground must be cleared for planting and then plowed and harrowed and the seed sowed. All this was the hardest kind of hard work. Plows were crude affairs of wood, shaped like a large shovel turned partly on edge, with a crude point and edge of wrought iron. Reaping and threshing were by hand with sickle or cradle and flail. The records show that there had been little improvement in farming tools and methods since Old Testament times. The horse-drawn tools of the present day have practically all been developed in the last seventy years.

Grain is cut to-day with a horse-drawn machine called a binder that cuts the grain and binds it in bundles and piles it in heaps ready for hauling to stacks or threshing machines. A hundred years ago it was cut by hand with sickle or cradle, as the grain-cutting scythe was called, made into bundles by hand and carried by hand for shocking.

To-day grain is threshed by machines driven by steam or gasoline. These thresh the straw, weigh the grain, and stack the waste straw. In Lincoln's youth, they still used a flail. This was merely two straight sticks joined together end to end with a hinge. The grain was beaten with this until the wheat or

oats were all shaken out and lay on the threshing floor. It was so that it had been done for thousands of years. There are men still living who can remember crude implements little better than those used in the youth of Lincoln.

In the intervals of work for his father, Abraham hired out, chopping, plowing, or reaping for the neighbors. The usual pay was twenty-five cents a day, which went to his father. In our great grandfather's time, none of the money that a boy earned belonged to himself until he was twenty-one years of age. "Coming of age" really meant something then. It meant that the boy was a man now on his own account, standing on his own feet, earning his own pay, and of course paying his own way.

After he became President, Lincoln told William H. Seward, his Secretary of State, the story of the first money he earned for himself. It happened before he was twenty-one and was, therefore, all the more surprising.

"I was about eighteen years of age," said Mr. Lincoln, "and belonged, as you know, to what they call down South the 'scrubs'; people who do not own land and slaves are nobody there; but we had succeeded in raising, chiefly by my labor, sufficient produce, as I thought, to justify me in taking it down the river to

sell. After much persuasion, I had got the consent of my mother to go, and had constructed a flatboat large enough to take the few barrels of things we had gathered, to New Orleans. A steamer was going down the river. We have, you know, no wharves on the Western streams, and the custom was, if passengers were at any of the landings, they were to go out in a boat, the steamer stopping and taking them on board.

"I was contemplating my new boat and wondering whether I could make it stronger or improve it in any part, when two men with trunks came down to the shore in carriages and looking at the different boats singled out mine and asked: 'Who owns this?' I answered modestly, 'I do.' 'Will you,' said one of them, 'take us and our trunks out to the steamer?' 'Certainly,' said I. I was very glad to have the chance of earning something and supposed that each of them would give me a couple of bits (a bit was twelve and a half cents).

"The trunks were put in my boat, the passengers seated themselves on them, and I sculled them out to the steamer. They got on board, and I lifted the trunks and put them on the deck. The steamer was about to put on steam again, when I called out, 'You have forgotten to pay.' Each of them took from his pocket a silver half-dollar and threw it on the bottom

of the boat. I could scarcely believe my eyes as I picked up the money.

“You may think it was a very little thing, and in these days it seems to me like a trifle, but it was a most important incident in my life. I could scarcely credit that I, the poor boy, had earned a dollar in less than a day; that by honest work I had earned a dollar. I was a more hopeful and thoughtful boy from that day.”<sup>1</sup>

We must know something of the place that the great rivers of the West held in the lives of the early settlers to understand this incident. When Lincoln was eighteen, there were no railroads anywhere in the country. Land travel was still by ox or horse team, and there were few roads in the West that were good enough for the use of wagons except in summer. This meant that such produce as there was to take to market had to be carried on land by the slow process of pack-horses.

Rivers were, therefore, much more important than they are to-day. To the dwellers on the Ohio and the Mississippi, which were the most important rivers in Lincoln’s country, New Orleans was the nearest market, although it was fifteen hundred miles away. The usual practice was to build great flat-bottomed

<sup>1</sup> *The Life of Abraham Lincoln* by Ida M. Tarbell, Vol. I.

row boats from the trees that stood along the banks. These were loaded and drifted down the long, slow course of the stream to New Orleans which stood at the mouth of the Mississippi. Usually there were two oars, one at the bow and one at the stern. They were long sweeps and were used only to steer the boat and to keep it in the middle of the current where the speed was the fastest.

Lincoln's first trip down the river was made soon after he reached the age of eighteen. A Mr. Gentry, the most important merchant of Gentryville, which was the nearest town to the Indiana home of the Lincolns, hired him as a "bow-hand." It was his first sight of anything different from the forests and clearings amid which he was born, and it undoubtedly made a deep impression on his wide-awake mind. He knew of slaves, of course. No one could live so near the Ohio River without hearing of the black men who were bought and sold like cattle and sheep. But there were few slaves in Kentucky then and none in Indiana. Forty years before, the Congress of the United States had passed a law called the *Northwest Ordinance*. This declared that the Northwest Territory, out of which Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin were afterwards carved, should be free of slavery forever.

Of course, the only slaves in any part of the country were Negroes brought from Africa. There were many used in the cotton and rice plantations of the South where such labor had been found extremely profitable. At the time of which we are speaking, the only states holding slaves in any numbers were in the South: Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Missouri. The rest of the country used only free labor.

On this long drift down to New Orleans, Lincoln must have seen much of slavery. Night after night they tied up at the bank or stopped for food and water. All this time they were in slave territory and in a land that must have seemed to the backwoods youth like a foreign country.

On the east bank of the Mississippi were Kentucky, Tennessee, and Mississippi; on the west bank were Missouri, Arkansas, and Louisiana. In Mississippi and especially Louisiana there were quantities of black men, held in slavery like so many horses or cattle. Unfortunately there is no record of what the young Lincoln thought or said at that time about what he saw.

## CHAPTER III

### HE COMES OF AGE

THROUGH all the years in Indiana, the boy had grown rapidly in body and mind. Even as a lad he was noted for his strength. His long body held a power of muscle and endurance that was famed even in that day when hard labor developed boys early and only the strong could stand the work of the daily life of the pioneer.

And he was growing in mind as well as body. The end of his schooling meant for him only the beginning of his study. Wherever he could find a book to borrow, no matter what it was about, he would set off through the woods until he reached the cabin of its owner. And when he had finished that book, he was master of all that it contained. When he was twenty-two years old, and was starting out for himself in Illinois, someone told him that if he expected to be a speaker or a writer, he should study grammar. The same friend told him of a man in another township six miles away who owned a book on grammar. At

the first opportunity Lincoln walked across the prairie, brought the book back with him and applied himself to it until he knew all that the volume could tell him.

“Well,” said he, “if they call that a science, I guess I’ll learn another one.”

The full and exact title of this book was:

ENGLISH GRAMMER  
in  
FAMILIAR LECTURES  
Accompanied by  
A COMPENDIUM  
Embracing  
A NEW SYSTEMATICK ORDER OF  
PARSING  
A NEW SYSTEM OF PUNCTUATION,  
EXERCISES IN FALSE SYNTAX,  
A KEY TO THE EXERCISES  
Designed  
for the use of schools and private learners  
By SAMUEL KIRKHAM

The book was printed at Cincinnati, in 1828. It is still in existence and is now the property of Mrs.

Robert Rutledge of Casselton, North Dakota. On the title page of the book Lincoln wrote these words: "Ann Rutledge is now learning grammar." We shall hear of Ann Rutledge again.

Thoroughness was a quality he had all his life long. The book or the man, or the child even, that could teach him something he did not know was the thing or the person that he sought until he, too, knew the one thing more.

While still a boy he developed a knack at rhyming. An Indiana neighbor for whom he had worked treated him unfairly. Lincoln wrote a poem ridiculing the man. When the neighbors heard the verses they laughed at the man till Lincoln was sorry for what he had done. Even as a boy he knew that two wrongs do not make a right and that unfairness in another does not justify unfairness in ourselves.

There was no cruelty in the boy's make-up. It was the habit of the time to treat domestic animals with a harshness that would not be permitted to-day. Lincoln had no part in or sympathy with this. Years after, his step-mother, who was also the best friend of his youth, said of him:

"Abe was a good boy, and I can say what scarcely one woman—a mother—can say in a thousand: Abe never gave me a cross word or look, and never refused,

in fact or appearance, to do anything I requested him. I never gave him a cross word in all my life. . . . His mind and mine—what little I had—seemed to run together. He was here after he was elected President. He was a dutiful son to me always. I think he loved me truly. I had a son, John, who was raised with Abe. Both were good boys; but I must say, both now being dead, that Abe was the best boy I ever saw or ever expect to see."

Young Lincoln was just of age, twenty-one, when his father decided to move again. The land where they had settled in Indiana was poor, and the people were mostly a shiftless lot. Besides, Thomas Lincoln was of the breed that is always ready to believe that somewhere else is better than where one happens to be. There are plenty of Thomas Lincolns in the world.

Word had come to them in Indiana of a new country that was being opened up in Illinois in the valley of the Sangamon. The Sangamon is a small river in Central Illinois which flows into the Illinois. To-day it drains one of the most fertile and prosperous farming sections in the world. Back in 1830, it flowed sluggishly through unplowed prairie. Along its bank stood groves of elm and hickory trees with some sprinkling of oak. There were few towns, and

these were merely clusters of rough frame and log houses.

The Lincolns packed their household goods in wagons drawn by ox-teams and set out for the new Land of Promise. Abraham did a little business for himself on the way by laying in a stock of small odds and ends which he sold to settlers and other travelers along the road. It was mostly needles and thread, pins, buttons, and other small necessities. The total value of this peddler's stock was only a little over thirty dollars, but the young merchant boasted that he had doubled his money before he reached the end of the journey. The place where they stopped first in Illinois was Decatur, now a thriving town. They had been two weeks on the way. It was the Spring of the year and they had forded flooded streams and wallowed through the almost bottomless mud of the prairie roads. On their way they passed Vincennes, Indiana, and the young Lincoln saw his first printing press. Now he had some idea of how the books were made that already meant so much to him.

It was about ten miles west of Decatur that the Lincolns pitched their tent. John Hanks, a cousin of Abraham, had gone ahead and already had the logs cut for a cabin. In 1860, Lincoln wrote a very brief autobiography in which he said:

"Here they built a log cabin, into which they removed, and made sufficient of rails to fence ten acres of ground, and raised a crop of sown corn upon it the same year. These are, or are supposed to be, the rails about which so much is being said just now, though these are far from being the first or only rails ever made by Abraham."

This was the end of Lincoln's life at home. He was past twenty-one, the age when each boy was supposed to launch out for himself. His father and his step-mother were established in a comfortable cabin of their own with a crop already in the ground. From now on the story of Abraham Lincoln is the story of an independent human being.

And what did he start with, there in Central Illinois, a grown man with a great future before him?—A strong body, an active, hungry mind, and the clothes he stood in. That was literally all. The man who had had a reputation in Indiana as the best rail-splitter of the county did not even own an axe with which he could earn a day's pay.

## CHAPTER IV

### EARLY DAYS IN ILLINOIS

IT wasn't so much handicap then to be poor; probably it never is, if one keeps his spirit and his courage. Poverty is a spur that will often send the poor man ahead of the rich one in the race of life.

When he struck out from his father's home in Illinois, he had no profession, no trade. It was a day when men believed in every man's ability to do whatever he had to do. "Do it yourself" was the motto of the pioneers. The first problem of everyone was to make a living for himself and his family.

History tells that the first work Lincoln did for himself was to earn the cloth from which to make himself some more clothes. He "split four hundred rails for every yard of brown jeans (the coarsest kind of heavy cotton cloth) dyed with white walnut bark that would be necessary to make him a pair of trousers." This meant that the trees must be felled and split into rails and the rails piled. Out of these rails were built the crooked "stake and rider" fences that the early settlers used in their fields. For the or-

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dinary worker a hundred rails was a fair day's work, but Lincoln probably far exceeded that number. Nevertheless, we may be sure that he paid a good price for that pair of trousers.

During the rest of that year, which was 1830, he worked as a day laborer in the neighborhood of his father's farm, plowing, cutting wood, splitting rails, doing whatever odd jobs he found in that primitive community. Wages were pitifully small, but little was needed on which to live with as much comfort as was enjoyed by everybody. The chief difference between the rich and the poor was that the rich had slightly larger cabins and had more land for which they were usually still in debt.

The winter of 1830-31 was known in Illinois as the winter of the "deep snow." More snow fell than even the earliest settlers had ever known. This gave an idea to a restless neighbor of the Lincolns, one Denton Offut. He knew that heavy snow meant high water in the river when it began to melt in the spring. The Sangamon River, which flowed not far from the little settlement and thence down to the Illinois and so to the Mississippi, was a shallow, crooked, sluggish stream, full of snags and sunken logs. There was much argument over the possibility of using it for cargo boats, and Offut determined to try it.

Accordingly, he hired Abraham Lincoln, Lincoln's step-brother John D. Johnston, and his cousin John Hanks, to take a flat boat loaded with produce down the rivers to New Orleans. It was March when they started to join Offut at Springfield, a new town on the Sangamon, now the capital and one of the important cities of the state. Offut's guess about the high water had come true,—the country was flooded so that it was hardly possible to travel by road.

The three young men found a large canoe and came down the Sangamon in it as far as Springfield. There they found that Offut, a careless, improvident sort of person, had not been able to find the kind of boat he wanted and was planning to build one. Consequently the three voyagers turned boat builders, cutting the trees and hewing out the timbers for the frame of the flatboat. This was at the town of Sangamon, about eight miles from Springfield, a village that has long since vanished from the face of the earth.

John Roll, afterwards a citizen of Springfield, was living at Sangamon at that time and has left a description of young Lincoln as he looked then.

"He was a tall, gaunt young man, dressed in a suit of blue homespun jeans, consisting of a round-about jacket, waistcoat, and breeches which came to within

four inches of his feet. The latter were encased in rawhide (untanned leather) boots, into the tops of which, most of the time, his pantaloons were stuffed. He wore a soft felt hat, which had at one time been black, but now, as its owner dryly remarked, 'was sun-burned until it was a combine of colors.' "

The boat was built and launched, but not without a happening that came near being a tragedy. The water was still high and the current was running fast. They needed a small boat to use with the large flat-boat. Accordingly, they cut a large tree to make a dugout as it was called. This was a crude boat such as the Indians used, hollowed out of a single log. Such a craft is unsteady and hard to handle unless one is used to it.

Two of the men, Walter Carman and John Seamon, who tried the first trip were thrown into the river, but managed to pull themselves into the branches of a tree that stood in the water where the river had changed its course. Now the problem was to get them ashore. Lincoln took charge of the rescue work. Going up-stream above the tree he had his helpers roll a large log into the stream. A long rope was tied to one end of it and the other end held fast on shore. An active young fellow seated himself

astride the log and it was launched out into the current.

This clumsy craft shot down at high speed. In his effort to catch hold of the branches of the tree, the young man lost his grip on the log, and barely managed to pull himself up on a friendly branch. Now there were three men instead of only two in the tree.

This put the next move up to Lincoln. He launched another log as before and rode it down himself. He was more successful than the first man had been. As the log swept down on the tree he caught a branch and took a turn of the rope around it, thus checking the force of the current. Then he drew the log back gradually until the three stranded rivermen could get astride it. Then he called to the men on shore to hold fast to their end of the rope and he cut loose from the tree. The force of the current pulling at the rope swung them around against the bank and soon they were dry and warm.

Their voyage down the Sangamon was not without excitement. A few miles below Sangamon they hung up on a mill dam. Again it was Lincoln who got them out of their difficulty. Unloading the cargo, he bored a hole in the bottom of the boat that extended over the dam. In this way he got rid of

the water that had come in and they soon tilted the boat over the dam, reloaded and went on their way.

The trip to New Orleans took slightly over a month and again Lincoln saw something of slavery. Some historians have reported that he saw a mulatto girl being sold in the slave market like a horse or a cow and there made a vow: "If I ever get a chance to hit that thing, I'll hit it hard." There is no proof that he actually said this, but there is plenty of reason to believe that every glimpse he had of slavery increased his dislike of it.

Already a group of people in the North, called Abolitionists, were making themselves heard. Under the leadership of men like William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, and Owen Lovejoy, they were denouncing slavery as the unpardonable sin and the deadly evil. They were violent in their language and denounced every one, in the North and South, who dared to disagree with them. Lincoln already knew of their work undoubtedly, but his own tolerant, thoughtful mind could hardly go along with them. The declaration of one of them that the Constitution of the United States was "a covenant with death and a league with hell" could find no echo in the heart of the man who was later to fight a great war for the preservation of that Constitution.

## CHAPTER V

### LINCOLN KEEPS A COUNTRY STORE

WHEN Lincoln came back from his trip to New Orleans, he was no farther along in money or plans than when he left. His pay on the trip was twelve dollars a month and his keep,—a sum total of twenty-four dollars for the two months that he had been away. But now what looked like a fresh chance opened before him. His employer on the flatboat, Denton Offut, had the idea that the village of New Salem, a new settlement on the Sangamon, was to be a great city, and he had opened a store there. There were not over a dozen houses in the town and few of the settlers had cash with which to pay for their purchases, but Offut was always hopeful. The store was opened and Lincoln was hired as clerk.

Trade was naturally dull and there were long hours when the young clerk had nothing much to do but lean over the counter and chat with occasional visitors. He already had a reputation as a story teller and his days in the store increased it. This new

work also gave him plenty of time to read and whenever he could hear of another book that he had not read, he would borrow it and pore over it till he knew it from cover to cover. At that time in the whole state of Illinois there was hardly a single public library and there was none anywhere within Lincoln's reach. The man who had as many as a dozen books was regarded with awe as a person of wealth and learning. Whenever he had a fresh book in his hands, Lincoln could be seen through the long, lazy summer afternoons lying flat on the ground under a big tree outside the store buried in the pages of his book.

New Salem was also the place where he took his first step into politics. A local election was being held and a man was needed to act as clerk. All that was required was the ability to write, but there were apparently few who could meet that test. Lincoln said, "I can make a few rabbit tracks," and got the job. When voting was slack, he told stories. We may be sure that there were few voters in that small village who ever forgot the tall, gaunt stranger who acted as clerk of the election that summer afternoon.

They were to find out soon, also, that Lincoln could do something besides write and tell stories. Amusements were crude and often coarse then. One of

the favorite varieties was wrestling. It was usually a rough-and-tumble scuffle in which any trick was fair so long as it worked. Not far from New Salem was a small settlement called Clary's Grove. The young men there were a wild lot, much given to drinking, fighting, and rude horse-play.

Their champion was Jack Armstrong and everywhere they went, at elections, picnics, auctions, even at religious gatherings, they boasted loudly that Jack could whip any man in the state, if not in any state. Lincoln's employer Offut heard their boasts and retorted that his new clerk was a better man than Armstrong. Lincoln had no taste for what he called "woolling and pulling," but was finally persuaded to take up the challenge of Clary's Grove.

The match was held and Lincoln was getting the better of his opponent when the latter tried an unfair trick. This so enraged Lincoln that he seized Armstrong by the throat and shook him as a dog shakes a rat. Armstrong's friends were about to rush to his rescue, and a general riot was threatened, when their admiration for Lincoln's strength got the better of their anger, and they broke out in cheers. Lincoln thus made another group of lifelong friends, although he was never very proud of his skill as a wrestler.

The Armstrongs became great friends of his, and he spent much time at their house. When the store at New Salem failed as it did soon, he lived for some weeks at the Armstrong home and said afterwards that Mrs. Armstrong was as good to him as his own mother could have been.

Twenty-five years later he was able to do a good turn for the son of the man he had beaten so soundly. Jack Armstrong had moved to a small town called Havana that still stands on the Illinois River. His son Duff had been drawn into a quarrel at a camp-meeting. A few hours later one of his opponents was dead. Duff was accused of striking the blow that caused his death. Jack had died a few years before, but the boy's mother wrote to Lincoln, then practicing law in Springfield, told him of her trouble and asked his help. Here is Lincoln's reply:

**"DEAR MRS. ARMSTRONG:**

"I have just heard of your deep affliction and the arrest of your son for murder. I can hardly believe that he can be capable of the crime alleged against him. It does not seem possible. I am anxious that he should be given a fair trial at any rate, and gratitude for your long-continued kindness to me in adverse circumstances prompts me to offer my humble services gratuitously in his behalf.

"It will afford me an opportunity to requite, in a small

degree, the favors I received at your hand, and that of your lamented husband, when your roof afforded me a grateful shelter, without money and without price."

When the trial was held the most damaging testimony was that of another boy who swore that he had seen Duff Armstrong strike the fatal blow. Lincoln asked what time it was.

"Ten or eleven o'clock at night," he said. Then the boy swore that it was full moon and bright as day.

Lincoln's answer was to produce an almanac and show that on the night of the fight there was a new moon and that, at the hour named, the moon was so low that it gave no light. This disposed of the evidence against Duff Armstrong, and he was set free.

## CHAPTER VI

### LINCOLN AS A SOLDIER

**T**HREE was nothing remarkable about Lincoln's early interest in politics. In Illinois then nearly every man talked politics half the year, and most of them hoped at some time to run for office. It was a new state and there was everything to be done. Furthermore, it cost little to go through the sort of campaign that was held then, and the prospect of a salary for holding office was attractive to men who saw little enough money from year's end to year's end.

Lincoln was popular among people who knew him and he was ambitious. He had already had some practice in public speaking, and office was the only open road to fame and power. There was nothing unusual about this desire of his for office. Lincoln's interest in the problems of government began almost as soon as he was old enough to know what government was.

Therefore, in March, 1832, two years after he

came into Illinois, he announced himself as a candidate for the State Legislature. This, as you know, is the body that makes the laws for the state. Congress makes the laws for the nation.

Here is something for us to think about when we mourn over our lack of opportunity to do great things: Abraham Lincoln, born of poverty, unschooled, without money or training, still owning hardly more than the clothes he wore, at the age of twenty-three declaring himself a candidate for the Legislature to help make the laws for the young state. Few of us would have as much courage at twice that age.

In those days there was not much formality about running for office. There were political parties, but no nominating conventions were held as now, nor was it necessary to pass around petitions to show that a certain number of voters wanted a man to run for office.

To-day, men and women called delegates meet in conventions to decide who shall run for various offices. In many states, a kind of an election called a primary is held at which all members of a particular party vote for the men that they want as candidates for office.

A hundred years ago all that was necessary was

that a man should desire to run. And there is no doubt that Abraham Lincoln wanted to make the campaign.

But his hopes were interrupted in a most unexpected way. Remember that Illinois was still not far removed from the Indian days. That part of the country had been held by a tribe called the Sacs before the white man came. They were a robust, warlike tribe, but had not given much trouble to the white man. By a treaty, they had agreed to move west of the Mississippi and give up their lands to settlers. Then their chief, Black Hawk, thought better of the bargain.

“Land cannot be sold,” he argued. “It was given to us by the Great Father for our use and our children’s use. If we sell it to the white man, we are robbing our children not yet born.”

He led his braves back into Illinois and declared that he would drive the white man from the land. In spite of the absence of railroads, telegraphs, or regular mails, news of that sort traveled fast. It was in April, 1832, that a rider dashed through the streets of New Salem announcing that the Indians were on the war path and that the governor was calling for volunteers to drive them out of the state. Every man was a fighter as well as a voter and there

was more than one man in the state who had fought the Indians before. The blood of his Indian-fighting grandfather was in Lincoln's veins, and he promptly volunteered.

A company was raised in New Salem and Lincoln was elected captain, although he had had no military experience. Soldiers in volunteer forces elected their own officers and usually chose those they trusted most and liked best, much as a school baseball team chooses its captain. The company was drawn up in an open field, candidates for captain took their stand at one side, and the soldiers were called upon to line up with their favorite candidate. When it was over, most of the men in the company were found on Lincoln's side. It was his first election to any office and it pleased him as much as anything that ever happened to him.

Discipline was simple, and no one knew anything about drill or the manual of arms. There were no uniforms and each man brought his own gun and ammunition. The officers furnished their own horses or walked. A story is told of Lincoln to show his ignorance of military matters. In the course of the march, it was necessary for his company to pass single file through a narrow gateway. Lincoln did not know the order necessary to do this, so he called out:

"The company is dismissed, and will fall in again on the other side of the fence."

It wasn't very military, but it was good, common-sense way of getting his men where he wanted them.

Lincoln's military service was short and not very exciting. It was spring and the roads were muddy. The men soon tired of wading rivers and sleeping in the mud and eating the scanty food they were able to get. Besides, the Indians were in the northern part of the state a long way from New Salem. The men had volunteered to defend their homes. When they found these were in no danger, they began to think of their families and the spring planting that was being neglected. Accordingly, when the month for which they had enlisted had passed, with no sign of Indians, many of them decided they had had enough and set out for home.

There was still need of troops, however, and Lincoln with others volunteered for a second term of thirty days. The army officer who swore him into the service the second time was named Robert Anderson. Thirty years later Lincoln was to hear of Anderson again. It was after his inauguration as President. The people of South Carolina were demanding that Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor be surrendered to them. The officer commanding the fort for the gov-

ernment of the United States was Major Robert Anderson.

When the second month was up, the Indians were still on the war path and Lincoln enlisted for a third term of thirty days. Still he saw no fighting, nor did he come closer to a fight in the whole course of the war than to see the bodies of five white scouts who had been killed and scalped the day before.

When Lincoln's company was finally disbanded, they had followed Black Hawk and his braves across the state line into Wisconsin. It was a long journey back to Salem and, in July, Illinois is usually baking under a blazing sun. To make matters worse, someone stole Lincoln's horse just as he was ready to set out on his return and he had no money with which to buy another. As a matter of fact, he had hardly enough money with which to pay his small expenses on his slow way back on foot. Many of the volunteers had nothing to eat on the homeward journey, except cornmeal which they cooked in water boiled over the fire in rolls of bark, Indian fashion.

## CHAPTER VII

### ODD JOBS FOR A LIVING

WHEN Lincoln arrived back in New Salem, it was August and the campaign for the Legislature was in full swing. In the early days Illinois was strongly Democratic while Lincoln was a Whig. That party has long since ceased to exist. We usually say that the Republican party took its place, but that is hardly true.

The fact is that as slavery came more and more into prominence, as the thing that most people were interested in on one side or the other, it became increasingly clear that the Whig party was dying. It had nothing much to say about slavery and there was no place for a party that was silent on so big and menacing a question. The South was divided between the two parties until slavery came into the picture. Then it became almost solidly Democratic and that party more definitely associated with slavery.

As you will see later, there was no particular objection on the part of most people in the North to the

Southerners holding slaves. The Northern states were free and intended to remain so, but the trouble came when the slave-holders attempted to take their Negroes into free territory. Population was growing in the new territory west of the Mississippi River, and the people of the South were determined that the new states to be made here should be open to slavery. As they argued for this, they aroused many Northern people, especially in New England and New York, to declare that the new states should be free. Had there been no question over these new states probably slavery would have lasted much longer than it did.

Lincoln was a great admirer of Henry Clay, at that time the most powerful man in the Whig party and one of the most influential men in the whole country. Clay was an eloquent speaker and probably as able a man as Kentucky has produced, except Abraham Lincoln. He was called the "Hero of Compromise" because of his skill in settling difficult questions without a quarrel. He had inherited slaves and bought others, but had never sold any and when he died he had set free all he then owned because he had come to believe that one human being had no right to hold another in bondage.

It was as a Whig that Lincoln ran for the Legislature. Campaigns were simple, informal affairs. A

candidate went wherever he could find people gathered for any purpose whatever and, when he could get a chance, he got up and spoke to them. In the evenings he talked to the voters on street corners, in country stores, schoolhouses, anywhere he could find an audience.

It is not surprising that Lincoln was a popular speaker. This was not the first time he had stood on his feet and talked. The first year he was in Illinois he and his cousin John Hanks heard a man make a political speech. When it was over, John said his cousin Abe could make a better one. John tells the story:

“I turned down a box, and Abe made his speech. The other man was a candidate, Abe wasn’t. Abe beat him to death, his subject being the navigation of the Sangamon River. The man, after Abe’s speech was through, took him aside and asked him where he had learned so much and how he could do so well. Abe replied stating his manner and method of reading and what he had read. The man encouraged him to persevere.”

Party lines didn’t mean much in local elections, and every candidate expected the support of his friends of whatever party. Wherever Lincoln was known, he drew a large vote, but it wasn’t enough to elect

him and when the voting was over, on August 6th, he found himself still facing the problem of making a living. He had been a boatman, a clerk, a soldier, and a candidate for office, but he still had no settled way of earning money to live on. That disturbed no one much in that pioneer community, and Lincoln knew he could always go back to the axe and the plow if he had to. But strong as he was, he had no great liking for such hard ways of earning his daily bread and he cast about for something more agreeable.

His first thought was of storekeeping. It was easy work and it gave free rein to his favorite occupation—that of meeting people and talking with them. New Salem had about a hundred inhabitants and there were four stores. The country around was still thinly settled and it looked like "poor pickings," as the country people called it. A partner in one of the four stores had grown tired of the poor business that he saw being done across the counter. Lincoln bought him out and became a partner of William F. Berry, in the firm of Berry and Lincoln. He had no money with which to pay for the half interest he had bought, so he gave his note. This was merely a promise to pay at some future date.

Soon they bought two other stores. This meant they had all the grocery business in New Salem, the

fourth store dealing only in dry goods. But the grocery business of New Salem was still too small to pay a living wage to two grown men and they soon were struggling with the problem of paying the various promissory notes that had an annoying habit of falling due.

The great thing to remember about Lincoln's career as a storekeeper was that it gave him leisure for talking and reading. In some way he got his hands on some of the plays of William Shakespeare and the poems of Robert Burns, the great Scotch poet. With one of these immortal books before him, he cared little for questions of profit or loss in the grocery business.

It was at this time, too, that he began to think of studying law. Then, as now, most of the successful candidates for office were lawyers, and Lincoln had practically determined that politics interested him more than anything else he knew. As a boy in Indiana, someone had loaned him a copy of the *Revised Statutes of the State*. It was dry reading for a boy of eighteen, but his natural bent had made it fascinating to him.

While he was dreaming away his days as a storekeeper in New Salem, a happy chance brought to his hands one of the great books of the law, one that is to that profession what the Bible is to the Christian

religion. Miss Tarbell tells the story as it was told by Lincoln to A. J. Conant, an artist who painted Lincoln's picture in Springfield, in 1860. Here it is in his own words:

“One day a man who was migrating to the West drove up in front of my store with a wagon which contained his family and household plunder. He asked me if I would buy an old barrel for which he had no room in his wagon, and which he said contained nothing of special value. I did not want it, but to oblige him I bought it. Some time after, in overhauling things, I came upon the barrel, and emptying it upon the floor to see what it contained, I found at the bottom of the rubbish, a complete edition of *Blackstone's Commentaries*. I began to read those famous books, and I had plenty of time, for during the long summer days, when the farmers were busy with their crops, my customers were few and far between. The more I read, the more intensely absorbed I became. Never in my whole life was my mind so thoroughly absorbed. I read until I absorbed them.”

It is usually said that Lincoln cared little for the practice of the law; that his real interest from the beginning was in politics. This statement in his own words shows at least the depth and strength of the attraction that his early study had for him. Whatever wise men anywhere had said or written was always packed full of meaning for him.

Lincoln soon found that he must do something besides sell groceries and study law and tell stories if he was to make a living. Then, as now, the postmaster in small towns and country districts was a merchant or engaged in some other occupation. In May, 1833, Lincoln was appointed postmaster in New Salem. It is not likely, however, that this added much to his income. Mails were light and irregular. Frequently as much as two weeks would pass with no mail at all. Postage rates were still high. The lowest rate for a letter written on a single sheet was six cents for thirty miles or less. The greater the distance, or the heavier the letter, the higher the rates. A single sheet for four hundred miles or more cost twenty-five cents. Naturally people did not write letters unless they had something important to say.

The mail was carried in four-horse coaches between the larger towns and then to the smaller places on horseback. There was no delivery from house to house, although Postmaster Lincoln seems to have carried around many of the letters that came to his office. His favorite place for keeping them was in the crown of his tall hat.

By this habit of delivering letters to his patrons he increased his acquaintance. At the same time he widened his knowledge of the world. People who re-

ceived letters usually read their contents aloud while the postmaster stood at the door and listened. You must remember that there were few newspapers in the country in those days and information about what was happening was passed along by word of mouth.

Even with the double job of storekeeper and postmaster, Lincoln found it a hard task to make both ends meet. Presently there came a chance to learn surveying. This is the measuring of land and the laying out of roads and towns. In Illinois, farm land is divided into what are called sections a mile square, containing 640 acres each. Townships are supposed to contain thirty-six sections. Most of the roads run straight north and south or east and west, so that all the farming country is laid out in squares like children's building blocks. Of course, all these roads, sections, and farms must be measured and stakes set up at the corners so that each man should know how far his farm extended.

Surveying in the early days was not the exact science that it is to-day. Many of the early measurements were made by the simple process of pacing off a certain distance each way. A step was supposed to be three feet. When we consider that the average man seldom steps more than thirty-two inches,—four inches less than a yard,—it is easy to see how

many mistakes were made. Later on, it was the practice to tie a cloth around a wagon wheel and then count the number of times the wheel turned around in driving across country. Then, by measuring the distance around the wheel a fair idea of the total distance could be had.

When he received his appointment as surveyor for Sangamon County, Lincoln did as he always did when a new task confronted him. He sought out the best help he could find and applied himself to learning his new duties. Raw and self-taught, as he was, he never permitted himself to undertake a given task without learning in advance everything about it that anyone could teach. A school teacher, Mentor Graham, had loaned him many books. Now he came to his aid again with a book on surveying. Lincoln dug into it in characteristic fashion, working day and night until he knew all that it could give him. It is said of his surveys that no one ever found a mistake in them.

His work as surveyor brought in three dollars a day to Lincoln, the highest pay he had ever received. This was good wages. The governor of the state of Illinois, the highest office in the state, was at that time paid only a thousand dollars a year, or less than three dollars a day.

But in spite of the help he had from his work as a surveyor, Lincoln was coming to the end of his road as a storekeeper. He and his partner still had the only grocery business there was in New Salem, but that wasn't enough. Lincoln and Berry were heavily in debt and there seemed little chance to pay what they owed. Early in 1834, two brothers named Trent came to them and offered to buy them out.

The Trents had no money either, so they gave a promissory note to Lincoln and Berry. They too soon found that they could not pay what they owed and they quietly left the country. Soon after this, Berry died and Lincoln found himself owing what seemed like a terrifying amount of money, although it was only about eleven hundred dollars.

The law provides a method of meeting a situation like this known as bankruptcy. This is a legal way by which a man turns his property over to the men to whom he owes money. They sell it for what it may bring and use the money to pay the debts. This wipes out the debts, even when there is not enough to pay them in full, and the debtor can start again free of debt. Lincoln refused to take advantage of this law because he was unwilling that any man should lose money through him. He went to all the people to whom he and Berry owed money and promised them,

if they would give him time, he would pay all the debts. And he did. It was years before he was through—fifteen years in all, but he paid it to the last nickel.

Years afterward, he said: "That debt was the greatest obstacle I ever met in life; I had no way of speculating, and could not earn money except by labor, and to earn by labor eleven hundred dollars, besides my living, seemed the work of a lifetime."

Perhaps it wasn't quite the obstacle that Lincoln thought. Many a man has found friends that he knew nothing about when he sat himself down to solve a problem like this. Probably, too, the thrill that the paying of the last dollar gave him was worth all the work and hardship that had been necessary to bring him to that point. The thought of unpaid debts would have hurt him more than the labor that was necessary for paying them.

## CHAPTER VIII

### LINCOLN IN THE LEGISLATURE

**I**N 1834, Lincoln's dream of sitting in the State Legislature came true. His persistence was rewarded by election that year, and two years later he was elected again. In the latter year, he was one of nine representatives from Sangamon County, each of them over six feet in height. The other members of the Legislature called them the "Long Nine" and declared that their combined height was fifty-five feet.

But in the meantime, a more important thing had happened to Lincoln. He had finally made up his mind to be a lawyer. He was tired of odd jobs. He was determined that he would no longer depend on his strong back and his long arms to earn him a living.

The practice of law in every frontier community is a simple thing compared with our methods to-day. In the first place, there were no law schools. Students borrowed or bought the few books that were necessary and read by themselves in leisure moments. In

all America at that day there was only one law school. This was in the little town of Litchfield, Connecticut, and it is doubtful if anyone in Illinois ever knew of it.

Even if he did, it is almost certain that it would never have occurred to Lincoln to go there to study. The people of Illinois looked with great disfavor on people from the East whom they called Yankees. Most of the members of the State Legislature in which Lincoln first sat were from the South, especially Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia. Yankees were supposed to be conceited and boastful of their superior education, and a sense of superiority is not good baggage to bring into a frontier state.

A pioneer preacher is quoted by some of the historians of that time as saying that the grace of the Lord "tuks in the isles of the sea and the uttermost part of the yeth. It embraces the Eskimo and the Hottentots, and some, my dear brethering, go so far as to suppose that it tuks in the poor benighted Yankees, but I don't go that fur."

Lincoln's Kentucky birth was fortunate since it saved him from any suspicion of Yankee conceit and superiority.

It was a slender equipment with which Lincoln began the study of law. He was almost as poor as

ever, in spite of his high wages as a surveyor and his election to the Legislature. Besides, he was burdened with debt. The nearest law books were in Springfield which was twenty miles away. But distance was nothing to young Lincoln. Back and forth he tramped the twenty miles to borrow a fresh book or return an old one. Usually he read as he walked, repeating over to himself the parts that he wanted to remember.

His habit of reading bore him good fruit. Ever since the days when he sprawled in front of the fire in his father's cabin he had cultivated the habit of reading and remembering what he read. His case proves that it is no hardship to have only a few books at your command, provided those few are worth reading. In the years that were to come, many people who had been taught to look upon Lincoln as a raw backwoodsman were amazed at the depth and richness of his knowledge of the great books of all time.

What he had read affected his own style of speaking and writing. When he wished, he could be as simple and crude as the people among whom he lived most of his life, but in his great moments, his language had the simplicity and power that we can find in all great writing. It is a common mistake to think that great writers are hard to read. It is only the poor

writers of whom that is true. Men with something to say have no trouble making themselves understood. It was that way with Lincoln. As he grew in mind and heart, he became more and more simple and direct.

But he was still a long way back on the road to fame in 1835, when he sat in his first session of the Illinois Legislature. Fortunately most of the other members had had much the same beginnings as himself. There were few of them who could afford better clothes than the jeans and the cowhide boots, and there were even a few coonskin caps and buckskin trousers.

Crude as the sessions were at Vandalia, then the capital of Illinois, this was the first chance Lincoln had had to meet the men who were making the history of the youthful state. They might wear coon-skin caps and use bad grammar, but we must not forget that they were building a great commonwealth, and they knew it. And there were plenty of keen minds in that Legislature, too,—minds that were leaving their mark on their time.

There was one man in particular whom Lincoln was to know well and meet often in later years. This was Stephen A. Douglas. Next to Lincoln, probably the young state held no more powerful individual at that time. He had been in the state only

a year and he was only twenty-one years old, four years younger than Lincoln. He was born in Vermont and had landed in Vandalia with no friends and no money. He said afterwards that he had only thirty-seven cents in his pocket when he reached the town. A year later he was running for the office of State's Attorney, one of the most important offices in the county, against one of the most successful and prominent lawyers in the state. We shall hear of Douglas many times before the story of Lincoln is finished.

The matters with which that ninth session of the Illinois Legislature dealt are not now of great importance. There was much talk of railroads, canals, and improvement of rivers to make the use of boats easier. The state was out of debt and the fear of the Indians had finally been lifted by the successful war with Black Hawk. Now they could settle down to work.

The first thing they did was to charter a State Bank with a capital of a million and a half dollars. Then they decided to borrow half a million dollars to build the Illinois and Michigan canal. This was more money than there was in half a dozen of the Western states put together and there were few men who knew anything about finance or banking.

This made little difference to the enthusiastic legislators. There was plenty of money in the wealthy East and if they could make the Easterners believe in the future half as firmly as they did, it would be easy to borrow the money they needed. What they were really doing was to borrow far more money than they could possibly expect to pay back for many years. Lincoln shared in the general rosy optimism and voted as gaily as any of them to spend the money they did not have.

The most important thing that happened to Lincoln at this time had nothing to do with the work of the Legislature. This was his first love affair. The young lady was Ann Rutledge, the daughter of James Rutledge, from South Carolina. The Rutledges came of a distinguished family. An ancestor had been one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and another had been Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, the highest position an American judge can occupy. James was the tavern keeper at New Salem, and Ann was one of a family of nine children.

When Lincoln first knew Ann she was engaged to be married to another man, one John McNeill. Soon after, however, McNeill went back East, promising to return at an early date. Nothing was heard

from him, and rumors began to drift about that he was an impostor and that his name was not McNeill; that he had come to Illinois for reasons that he was ashamed to tell. This was in the spring of 1835. Lincoln had just returned from the session of the Legislature at Vandalia. Ann finally made up her mind that McNeill was not coming back and had, in fact, deserted her. She consented to marry Lincoln, and although he had no money and only such prospects as any strong, ambitious young man might have, the future was rosy.

But Ann had never been strong and the strain of the worry and doubt and depression over McNeill broke her health and she became ill. Lincoln was sent for at the last and there was an hour of agony for the two lovers. Ann sank rapidly and died in August.

For a time, Lincoln's friends feared that he would lose his mind from grief and shock. He wandered for lonely hours in the woods, muttering to himself. His face grew more haggard even than usual and all his ambition and energy seemed to have passed with the death of his sweetheart. In later years, Lincoln spoke of the bitter memory to a friend and added: "And I have loved the name of Rutledge to this day."

Fortunately, for all of us, the deepest grief cannot

last forever. The daily duties soon called Lincoln from his mourning and the fire of his ambition flamed up again. In Illinois, members of the Legislature are elected every two years and, in 1836, Lincoln found himself under the necessity of making the campaign again. In those days, a man who ran for office had to be ready to meet everything, from newspaper abuse to personal attack in his meetings,—not greatly different from what happens to-day.

Lincoln's training in country store debates had quickened his naturally alert mind, and the man who interrupted him in the midst of his speech or invited him to a duel of wits usually had cause to regret it. Joshua Speed, an old friend and political associate of Lincoln in Springfield, tells of one case of this kind. There was a Democratic politician named George Forquer who had been a Whig and was suspected of having changed his politics in order to secure an appointment to public office. He was the only man in Springfield who had a lightning rod on his house.

This man got up in a public meeting where Lincoln was speaking and announced that Lincoln was a bright young man, but he needed to be "taken down" and that he would do it. Then he proceeded to make

a violent, noisy attack on Lincoln, shouting and waving his arms and tearing his hair.

When he had finished, Lincoln stood up and answered him calmly. Here is what he said:

"The gentleman commenced his speech by saying that this young man would have to be taken down, and he was sorry the task devolved upon him. I am not so young in years as I am in the tricks and trade of a politician; but live long or die young, I would rather die now than, like the gentleman, change my politics and, simultaneous with the change, receive an office worth three thousand dollars a year, and then have to erect a lightning rod over my house to protect a guilty conscience from an offended God."

It was just after he was elected to the Legislature for the second time that Lincoln was admitted to the bar. That is, he became a full-fledged lawyer, entitled to argue cases in the court. He had now a regular profession, although cases were few and far between for some time. But the days of odd jobs, of storekeeping, of sorting letters, of surveying roads and farms and town lots were over. From now on, the story of Abraham Lincoln is a story of a man rising slowly but steadily to the highest political point that an American can reach.

Apparently, the most important thing that hap-

pened at Vandalia that winter of 1836-7 was the passage of a bill by which the state capital was moved from Vandalia to the growing town of Springfield. Since Springfield was near Lincoln's home and was the town in which he had decided to locate for the practice of law, he took a prominent part in the work that led up to the passage of the bill. In fact, there were many charges of unfair tactics and what was called "log-rolling."

This term dated back to the practice of the early settlers in helping each other in the cutting and rolling together of the logs with which they built their houses and barns. Therefore, when politicians agreed to help each other with their votes, their enemies said they were "log-rolling."

So much excitement was created by the fight over the change in the state capital that a far more important matter passed almost unnoticed. For some time, there had been growing, through the North, a small but violently active party. Its members called for the immediate and complete abolition or wiping out of slavery. That was why they were called "Abolitionists." So far, they had few active supporters, but the feeling was spreading that something must be done to check the spread of slavery. There were no slaves in Illinois, but many of the early set-

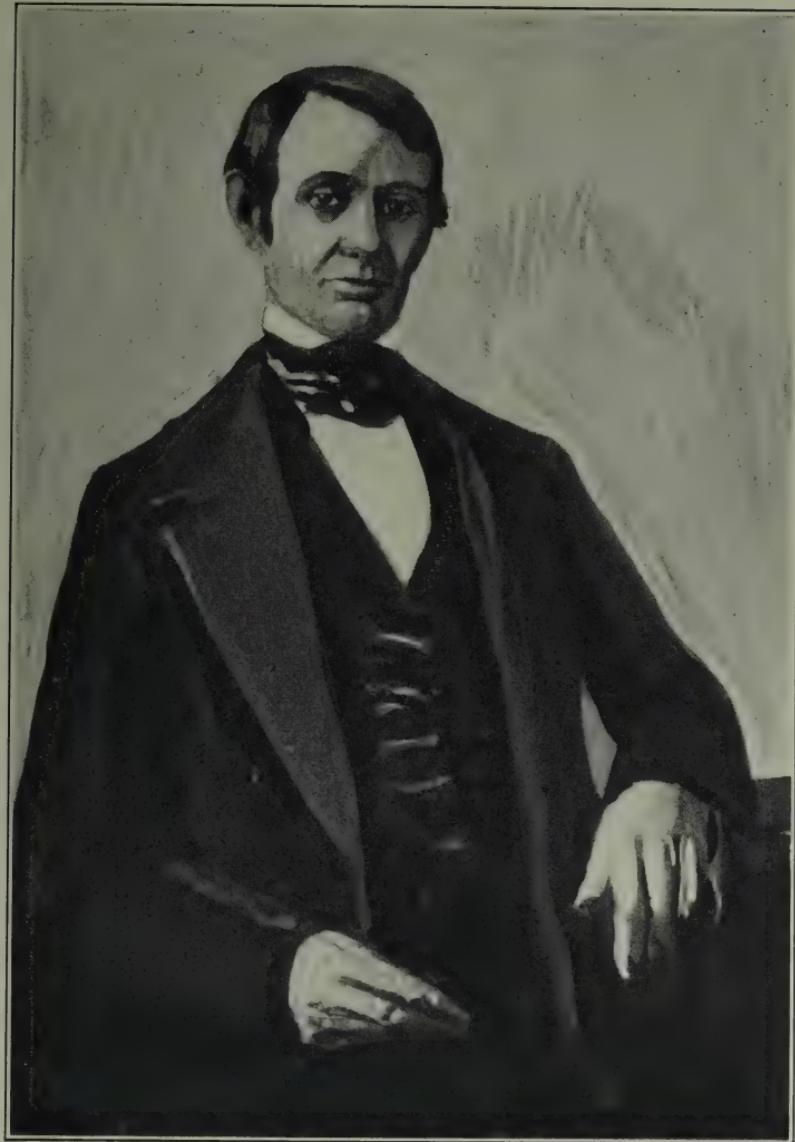
tlers were from south of the Ohio and were friendly to the feeling of the South. This means that the anti-slavery movement would find few friends among them.

Slavery was protected by the Constitution of the United States, they declared, and abolition should be opposed in every way possible. In fact, in 1837, the printing shop of an anti-slavery newspaper at Alton was wrecked, and Elijah Lovejoy, the editor, was killed. When this happened, not a newspaper in Springfield condemned the murder or made more than the briefest mention of it. This seems to show that most of the prominent people in the town sympathized with the mob that had killed Lovejoy.

Lincoln, we must believe, remembered the glimpses of slavery he had had on his two trips to New Orleans and he at least refused to be silent. The Legislature passed resolutions declaring in part:

“That we highly disapprove of the formation of Abolition societies and of the doctrines promulgated by them.

“That the right of property in slaves is sacred to the slave-holding states by the Federal Constitution, and they cannot be deprived of that right without their consent.”



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Lincoln at the age of thirty-seven. Believed to be the  
first time that Lincoln sat for a picture.



Lincoln refused to vote for these resolutions and proposed another set, which begins:

“Resolutions upon the subject of domestic slavery having passed both branches of the General Assembly at its present session, the undersigned hereby protest against the passage of the same.

“They believe that the institution of slavery is founded upon both injustice and bad policy, but that the promulgation of abolition doctrines tends rather to increase than to abate its evils.”

The names signed to this document were **Dan Stone and A. LINCOLN.**

The subject of slavery is a dry one now. It has been settled for sixty years. Only a few old men are living who fought in the great war that was necessary before slavery was driven forever from the American continent. But it was the cause of the most bitter struggle in the history of the United States and, before it was over, nearly a million Americans, in the North and South, had suffered wounds or death on the battlefields.

Not to know something about it is not to know the most glorious as well as the blackest pages in American history. We shall never know how much Lincoln

foresaw the blood and misery that it was to cause, but we may be sure that his vision leaped farther into the future than that of most men of his time. Before this story is ended, we shall see how he and young Stephen A. Douglas, already called the "Little Giant," were drawn into this argument, but on opposite sides.

## CHAPTER IX

### HE GOES TO CONGRESS

WHEN the session of the Legislature ended in the spring of 1837, Lincoln left New Salem for the last time. Henceforward, his home was to be in Springfield, until he left for Washington and his great work there. Moving was a simple matter for him. Joshua Speed, his close friend for the rest of his life, has described it better than we can do it in any words of our own:

“He had ridden into town on a borrowed horse, with no earthly property, save a pair of saddlebags containing a few clothes. I was a merchant at Springfield and kept a large country store, embracing dry-goods, groceries, hardware, books, medicines, bed-clothes, mattresses,—in fact, everything that the country needed. Lincoln came into the store with his saddlebags on his arm. He said he wanted to buy the furniture for a single bed. The mattress, blankets, sheets, coverlid, and pillow, according to the figures made by me, would cost seventeen dollars. He said that perhaps that was cheap enough but, small as the price was, he was

unable to pay it. But if I would credit him till Christmas, and his experiment as a lawyer was a success, he would pay then; saying in the saddest tone: 'If I fail in this, I do not know that I can ever pay you.' As I looked up at him, I thought then, and I think now, that I never saw a sadder face.

"I said to him: 'You seem to be so much pained at contracting so small a debt, I think I can suggest a plan by which you can avoid the debt and, at the same time, attain your end. I have a large room with a double bed upstairs, which you are very welcome to share with me.'

"'Where is your room?' said he.

"'Upstairs,' said I, pointing to a pair of winding stairs which led from the store to my room.

"He took his saddlebags on his arm, went upstairs, set them on the floor, and came down with the most changed expression of countenance. Beaming with pleasure, he exclaimed:

"'Well, Speed, I am moved.'"

Soon after he had moved to Springfield, Lincoln entered into partnership with John T. Stuart. The firm of Stuart and Lincoln lasted until Lincoln was elected to Congress. Later he had Judge Logan as a partner for a short time; then he joined William Herndon. The latter partnership lasted until Lincoln's death.

Another man came into Springfield to make his

home there the same year that Lincoln "moved." This was Stephen A. Douglas, who had been appointed register of the land office, a position that made it necessary for him to make his home in Springfield. Douglas was as different from Lincoln as it was possible for one man to be different from another. To begin with, he was short, while Lincoln was tall. He was good-looking and of elegant manners, while Lincoln was homely, gaunt and awkward. Douglas was gay and lively, while Lincoln was often sad.

There are three or four great statues of Lincoln, particularly the one by Augustus St. Gaudens, in Lincoln Park in Chicago, that show the man as he was. You can see him there, tall, gaunt, sad of face, but with a strength and power in every line that you will never forget once you have seen him. People who saw him, however, have spoken of his beauty of expression and the softness of his voice in the moments when he was greatly moved.

No one was more abused and caricatured during his life. His enemies called him a yokel, a backwoodsman, even an ape. Many of these lived to repent their harsh words.

In Springfield, as a young lawyer, he was popular with all kinds of people and probably no one thought

much about his personal appearance. Whenever he passed along the street, he stopped to speak to friends, to pat children on the head, to ask after the sick and the unfortunate, to cheer up the unlucky. We may be sure that there were few of the eighteen hundred inhabitants of Springfield who did not soon know Abraham Lincoln after he came to town to begin his work at the bar.

Springfield was not altogether a dull place in those days. There were dances and Lincoln took part, although he was undoubtedly anything but a graceful dancer. His name can still be seen on yellow old programs as a member of the committee in charge of some dance. He spoke at banquets, and he was an active member of a debating society that the young men of the town organized. Wherever people were busy in any sort of town activity, Lincoln could be found a member of the crowd, and usually one of the leaders.

The amusements of men in that day were often rough and crude. They were fond of wrestling and often a friendly match would end in a general fight. No sort of celebration was complete without a bottle or several bottles of liquor. Most of the general stores in the smaller settlements sold liquor. Lincoln and Berry had found it necessary to do this in their



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Statue of Lincoln by St. Gaudens, at Chicago



store in New Salem. Years afterwards, in one of his political debates with Douglas, of which we shall hear more later, Douglas accused Lincoln of having sold liquor at one time. Instead of denying it, or ignoring the charge, Lincoln admitted the truth of it and added:

“While I was behind the counter selling whiskey, Mr. Douglas was in front of it, drinking it.”

In 1842, Lincoln was married to Miss Mary Todd, a lively, attractive young lady who had come out from Kentucky to make her home in Springfield with her brother. The wedding had been delayed a long time and there are many stories of Lincoln’s gloom and his unwillingness to tie any woman down to so unattractive a person as himself. Some of the stories may be true. Probably many of them are false.

But there is one story that undoubtedly had a great deal to do with helping Miss Todd to make up her mind that it was Lincoln, and not Douglas or any other of her numerous beaux, that she wanted to marry. There was a Democratic official in Springfield named James Shields, a small, boastful, swaggering young man who had annoyed many of the young ladies by paying too violent court to them. He had also issued some orders about the payments

of taxes that annoyed the men as much as his attentions had angered the young women. Lincoln wrote a letter to a Springfield paper signed "Aunt Rebecca," ridiculing Shields and attacking his acts as an officer of the state.

The young ladies caught the idea and followed it up with more letters, also signed Aunt Rebecca, in which Aunt Rebecca proposed to Shields and made fun of him at the same time.

All this naturally made Shields boil with wrath and he demanded that the editor of the paper should tell him the true name of the writer of the letters. The editor appealed to Lincoln who consented to help him out of his hole by taking the responsibility not only for his own letter but also for the letters written by Miss Todd and her friend Miss Jayne. The immediate result was a challenge to a duel from Shields.

Eighty years ago, men still believed in the duel with pistols or swords when they fancied their honor had been injured, and Shields would listen to no other settlement. According to the practice, the man who was challenged had the choice of weapons. Lincoln consented to fight and chose cavalry broad-swords of the largest size. These are long, heavy swords, very hard to swing unless you know how. The place selected was on the west bank of the

Mississippi River, opposite the town of Alton, Illinois. The parties to the quarrel arrived at the chosen spot and preparations were begun for the fight. Miss Tarbell<sup>1</sup> tells what happened next in the words of a man who was present.

“I watched Lincoln closely while he sat on his log awaiting the signal to fight. His face was grave and serious. I could discern nothing suggestive of ‘Old Abe,’ as we knew him. I never knew him to go so long before without making a joke, and I began to believe he was getting frightened. But presently, he reached over and picked up one of the swords, which he drew from its scabbard. Then he felt along the edge of the weapon with his thumb, like a barber feels of the edge of his razor, raised himself to his full height, stretched out his long arms, and clipped off a twig from above his head with the sword.

“There wasn’t another man of us who could have reached anywhere near that twig, and the absurdity of that long reaching fellow fighting with cavalry sabers with Shields, who could walk under his arm, came pretty near making me howl with laughter. After Lincoln had cut off the twig, he returned the sword to the scabbard with a sigh and sat down; but I detected the gleam in his eye which was always the forerunner of one of his inimitable yarns, and fully expected him to tell a side-splitter there in the shadow of the grave—Shield’s grave.”

<sup>1</sup> *The Life of Abraham Lincoln*, by Ida M. Tarbell.

Naturally, that ended all talk of a duel, and the two antagonists returned to the Illinois side of the river, apparently the best of friends. In after years, Lincoln was ashamed of this adventure and usually refused to discuss it. Whatever may have been Miss Todd's feelings over Lincoln's courageous taking on himself the full responsibility for something in which she and her friend were at least half to blame, one thing is sure, they were married soon after this farce duel.

For the next seven years of his life in Springfield, Lincoln spent most of his time in his law practice. Pay was small and the cases were of little importance, but he worked over them as though he was to argue them before the Supreme Court of the United States. Almost from the beginning of his career as a lawyer, he managed, by strict economy, to live on the income from his practice, although there were one or two brief returns to politics. He had served eight years in the Legislature and was unwilling to go back. His ambition was driving him on to more important work.

The year he was married, he was a candidate for Congress, but the nomination and the election fell to his friend, Edward D. Baker. Nearly twenty years later, Baker was killed at Ball's Bluff in Virginia, one of the earliest battles of the Civil War. When the

news came to Lincoln, he walked the floor for hours, mourning the loss of the friend of his youth. This man, who had many friends, seems to have forgotten none of them. All through his busy life, he yet found time to write letter after letter, offering advice and aid to old friends in trouble, people whom he had not seen in years.

Although after he left home the first time in Illinois he saw little of his own family, he never wholly lost sight of them and his step-mother owed much to him for help and sympathy. His step-brother, John Johnston, was shiftless and uneasy. After the fashion of the time, he was always willing to believe that there was better fortune in some other place than the one where he happened to be. He owned a farm for which he was heavily in debt. At one time, he had the idea of selling the farm and moving to Missouri, where he was sure the land was better, and he appealed to Lincoln to lend him eighty dollars. Lincoln's reply to him is worth reading whenever we are restless and discontented. He wrote:

“What I propose is, that you shall go to work, ‘tooth and nail,’ for somebody who will give you money for it. I now promise you that for every dollar you will between now and the first of May get for your own labor, either in money

or as your own indebtedness, I will then give you one other dollar. In this, I do not mean you shall go off to St. Louis, or the lead mines, or the gold mines in California, but I mean for you to go at it for the best wages you can get close to home in Coles County. Now, if you will do this, you will soon be out of debt, and, what is better, you will have a habit that will keep you from getting in debt again. But if I should now clear you out of debt, next year you would be just as deep in as ever. You say you would almost give your place in Heaven for seventy or eighty dollars. Then you value your place in Heaven very cheap, for I am sure you can, with the offer I make, get the seventy or eighty dollars for four or five months' work."

Once again Lincoln was a candidate for the nomination for Congress before success came to him. It was in 1846 that he was finally elected.

The man who ran against him was Peter Cartwright, a famous pioneer preacher. For twenty years he had been traveling over the state preaching in small churches, schoolhouses, cabins, tents, the open fields, wherever he could gather a congregation together. He was tireless and fearless and a powerful speaker. Before he died in 1872, he had preached over eighteen thousand sermons and received twelve thousand members into the church.

At one time, during his campaign against Lincoln,

he preached a sermon in the evening, and Lincoln went to hear him. At the end of the service, Cartwright asked all the people in the congregation who expected to go to Heaven to rise. All stood up except Lincoln. Then the preacher asked those who expected to go to hell to rise. Lincoln sat still.

Cartwright leaned over and said:

"I have asked all who expect to go to hell to rise, and all who expect to go to heaven to rise, and now I want to inquire, where does Mr. Lincoln expect to go?"

Lincoln stood up and said he had not expected to take part in the service, but since the question had been asked, he would say, "I expect to go to Congress."

And go to Congress he did.

He served but one term and while we may be sure that he made many friends in Washington, as he had in Illinois, there is little to show that he had a great deal of influence in Washington. He opposed the war with Mexico, which was then being fought, and he risked his popularity in the speeches that he made defending his position. While he was in Washington, as a member of Congress, he progressed a little farther in his opposition to slavery. He saw clearly that we would win a great deal of new ter-

ritory in our war with Mexico and that there would be violent argument over whether or not slavery should be permitted there.

A man named Wilmot had introduced in Congress a bill called the Wilmot Proviso. This declared that whatever territory the United States secured through the war with Mexico should be free of slavery forever. There was much discussion. The South, naturally, was strongly opposed to any such law, since it would prevent Southerners taking their slaves into the new territory, and it was changed and amended times without number. Lincoln voted for it at every chance, although he seems to have made no speeches for it. Afterwards he said: "I may venture to say that I voted for it at least forty times during the short time I was there."

Washington was a simple, quiet place, in that day, compared with what it is now, although it must have seemed fashionable and gay enough to the "backwoodsman" from Illinois. There were few theaters or hotels, and most of the members of Congress lived in boarding houses, sometimes two and three in a room. Lincoln's friend Washburn, then librarian of the United States Supreme Court, tells a story of Lincoln that illustrates the homely habit of the man. He had called at the library for some books that he

wanted to take away. There were several of them. He piled them on a table, tied a large bandana handkerchief around them, put a stick through the handkerchief and, throwing the pack he had made over his shoulder, he marched off home to his boarding house through the streets of Washington.

But it was in Illinois, and not in Washington, that he was to do the work that finally brought him back to Washington as the head of the nation in the dark days that were coming.

The most important thing that happened to him as Congressman did not happen in Congress at all. This was a trip that he made to New York and New England after the session of Congress was over. It was the first chance he had had to see the East and it was also the first chance the East had had to see him. In New England, for the first time, he came to know people who were strongly and often violently opposed to slavery. Lincoln had believed and said that it should not be allowed to grow. In Massachusetts, he talked with people who were saying in public that it should be killed. In Boston he listened to a speech against slavery by Governor Seward, of New York. After it was over, he said:

“Governor Seward, I have been thinking about

what you said in your speech. I reckon you are right. We have got to deal with this slavery question and got to give much more attention to it hereafter than we have been doing."

It was like Lincoln to grow slowly in his beliefs. One of his great qualities was patience. From the time when he started in Illinois, without money, influence, or education, he had won his way by slow, hard work, study, and thought. He had seen that it takes years for a tree to grow, but when its roots are once firmly fixed in the earth, it stands for ages. It was like that with his ideas. He came to them after much patient thought, but once he had formed his conclusion, nothing could change it.

On his way home to Springfield, he visited Niagara Falls. William Herndon was then a young lawyer in Lincoln's office in Springfield. After Lincoln's death, he wrote a life of him. This is what Herndon says of Lincoln and Niagara.

"It happened that, some time after, I went to New York and also returned by way of Niagara Falls. In the office, a few days after my return, I was endeavoring to entertain my partner with an account of my trip and, among other things, described the Falls. In the attempt I indulged in a good deal of

imagery. As I warmed up with the subject, my descriptive powers expanded accordingly. The mad rush of water, the roar, the rapids, and the rainbow furnished me with an abundance of material for a stirring and impressive picture. The recollection of the gigantic and awe-inspiring scene stimulated my exuberant powers to the highest pitch.

“After well-nigh exhausting myself in the effort, I turned to Lincoln for his opinion. ‘What,’ I inquired, ‘made the deepest impression on you when you stood in the presence of the great natural wonder?’ I shall never forget his answer, because, in a very characteristic way, it illustrates how he looked at everything. ‘The thing that struck me most forcibly when I saw the Falls,’ he responded, ‘was, where in the world did all that water come from?’ ”

Another idea that came to him, as a result of this trip, was an invention for lifting steamships over shoals. The boat that he took on Lake Erie stuck on a sandbar and the crew had to shift the cargo from one end to the other to lighten the boat so that it would float off. Lincoln remembered the time that his flatboat had stuck in the mill-dam on the way down the Sangamon and, when he reached Springfield, he worked out a scheme by which a boat could be made more buoyant by a system of bellows and

ropes and pulleys. It was patented, but that was all that ever happened. Abraham Lincoln had an ingenious mind, but he was never intended to be a great inventor, as this one experience proved.

He was in Springfield only a short time when he was compelled to go again to Washington. President Taylor was anxious to make him Governor of Oregon, and Lincoln was forced to make the journey to consult the authorities at the White House. Oregon had only recently come into the Union as a result of a treaty with Great Britain. It then included what are now the great states of Oregon and Washington. Nothing happened in the capital, but there was an incident on the way that Lincoln always told with great enjoyment. On the journey he fell in with a man from Kentucky who offered him a chew of tobacco.

"No, thank you," said Lincoln. "I never chew."

Presently the Kentuckian lighted a cigar and offered one to Lincoln.

"No, thank you," said Lincoln. "I never smoke."

Some time later the man from Kentucky drew a flask from his pocket and offered it to his companion, assuring him that it was the best French brandy.

"No, thank you," said Lincoln, "I never drink."

When they parted, the stranger shook hands with Lincoln and remarked:

“See here, stranger, you’re a clever but strange companion. I may never see you again, and I don’t want to offend you, but I want to say this: my experience has taught me that a man who has no vices has few virtues.”

In that day, practically every grown man, and many boys and women, used tobacco in some form, and drinking was almost as common as eating. No wonder the traveler was surprised to find a man who did neither.

This trip to Washington was the last that Lincoln was to make for some years. From 1849, until 1854, he was giving his entire time to building up his practice of the law in Springfield where he apparently expected to spend the rest of his life.

## CHAPTER X

### FOLLOWING THE COURT

WE must believe that Lincoln really intended to give his whole time to the practice of the law when he came back to Springfield after his last trip to Washington. He had been a member of the bar now for thirteen years, but politics had taken a great deal of his time. He had been a member of the State Legislature for eight years and he had been a member of Congress and had refused a position as Governor of the new territory of Oregon. That was political experience enough, he thought, for a backwoods lawyer. Besides, he was now a family man and must think of making a living for his wife and children. Even then it cost almost as much in campaign expenses for a man to get himself elected to public office as the office was likely to bring in.

Having made up his mind to be only a lawyer, it was natural that he should also make up his mind to settle in Springfield. He had bought a home there three or four years before. Besides, most of his friends lived there. Accordingly he refused an offer

to go to Chicago, then as now the largest city in the state, and go into partnership with Grant Goodrich, a well known lawyer in that town. Friendship always meant a great deal to Abraham Lincoln and he felt that he would be lost and unhappy in a large city.

All his life he was interested in people and in helping them. A woman who knew him in Springfield told a story of his helpfulness. She had planned to go somewhere on the railroad. It was to be her first trip on the cars. Railroad travel wasn't by any means as common then as it is now and there were many grown people in that state who had never taken a trip by train.

She had been looking forward to it for weeks and when the morning finally came she could hardly wait for train time. A hackman was coming to take her trunk to the station. Through some misunderstanding, he failed to appear at the proper time. She was ready to start, had her hat and gloves on, but still no hackman. By this time, she was in tears and convinced that she would miss her train. It was as though the world was coming to an end. As she was standing by the gate, looking for the missing driver, tears streaming down her face, Mr. Lincoln came by and stopped to ask her what was the matter. She told him her trouble.

"How big is the trunk?" he asked. When he saw it, he acted quickly. "Come on," he said. "We can still make it."

And he heaved the small trunk up in his strong arms and started down the street, carrying it on his shoulder, while the small lady trotted alongside. They caught the train and Lincoln put her on board, kissed her goodbye, and told her to have a good time. Naturally, she never forgot him or his kindness.

In his own family, he was always kind and indulgent, often too kind for the good of his children. Probably there were occasions when Mrs. Lincoln wished that he would be more strict. A neighbor of the Lincolns heard a great noise of children in the street one day. Looking out, he saw Lincoln going by with his two small boys clinging to his coat tails.

"What's the matter with the boys?" asked the neighbor.

"Just what's the matter with the whole world," said Lincoln. "I've got three walnuts and each wants two."

As with other things, the work of the lawyer has changed in recent years. When Lincoln entered the profession, cases were small, and fees also. There were few large corporations and lawyers lived mostly

by small lawsuits, petty damage cases, disputes over the titles of land, and similar matters. As Lincoln had surveyed much of the land in the neighborhood of Springfield, he was naturally in demand as a lawyer in cases that had to do with the boundaries of farms, titles to land, and matters of that kind.

It is said of him that he never took a case that he did not believe in. Twenty years after he died, another lawyer in Springfield, Joseph Gillespie, wrote this of him:

“He was wonderfully kind, careful, and just. He had an immense stock of common sense, and he had faith enough in it to trust it in every emergency. Mr. Lincoln’s love of justice and fair-play was his predominating trait. I have often listened to him when I thought he would certainly state his case out of court. [He means that he thought Lincoln would give his case away by being too fair to the other side.] It was not in his nature to assume or attempt to bolster up a false position. He would abandon his case first.”

There is plenty of evidence that he not only refused to take cases that he didn’t believe in, but he would also try to discourage people from going into lawsuits unnecessarily. There is in existence a letter written by a Mr. Lord to William Herndon, Lin-

coln's partner in the law, which illustrates what we mean. This is the letter:

“One morning, not long before Lincoln's nomination—a year perhaps—I was in your office and heard the following: Mr. Lincoln, seated at the baize-covered table in the centre of the office, listened attentively to a man who talked earnestly in a low tone. After being thus engaged for some time, Lincoln at length broke in, and I shall never forget his reply:

“‘Yes,’ he said, ‘we can doubtless gain your case for you; we can set a whole neighborhood at loggerheads; we can distress a widowed mother and her six fatherless children and thereby get for you six hundred dollars to which you seem to have a legal claim, but which rightfully belong, it appears to me, as much to the woman and her children as it does to you. You must remember that some things legally right are not morally right. We shall not take your case, but will give you a little advice for which we will charge you nothing. You seem to be a sprightly, energetic man; we would advise you to try your hand at making six hundred dollars in some other way.’”

That sentence, “some things legally right are not morally right,” is worth remembering by everyone, lawyer or not.

Only a small part of the work of a lawyer then was done in the office. The sessions of the courts were held in different towns, and lawyers and judges

traveled from place to place. Lincoln lived in what was called the Eighth Judicial District. The whole court, judges and lawyers, traveled over the entire district, holding sessions in various towns. The district took in fifteen counties and was nearly a hundred and fifty miles square. Conveniences for travelers were few and poor,—not many of the towns were even on a railroad. Lawyers and judges journeyed from place to place on horseback or in carriages and lived in small taverns or boarding houses. At the beginning, Lincoln was too poor to own a horse of his own and usually borrowed one or joined with other lawyers in hiring a rig, usually what was called a “spring wagon.”

In my own youth in Illinois, there were still many of these spring wagons in use. They differed in appearance from ordinary farm wagons only in being lighter and having springs that made riding in them somewhat less tiring over the rough country roads.

If you have never lived in a prairie state like Illinois, you cannot imagine what the roads were like there in bad weather. The soil was deep and rich and the crops that it bore were marvels, but it was not good material for roads. Heavy rains or the thawing of the frost and snow in springtime turned

them into long quagmires through which horse and wagon wallowed, sinking often to the hubs. More than once it was impossible to travel at all except on foot or horseback.

Most of the streams were without bridges, and men and horses struggled through the fords as best they could. In times of high water, they were ferried over on crude flat-bottomed boats or waited for the floods to go down.

When the hard frosts came in winter, these roads were turned into horrors of roughness. The ruts and bumps were frozen hard as stone; the sharp ridges cut the horses' hoofs and bounced the poor traveler unmercifully. Only in the summer were the roads decently passable, and even then they were likely to be ankle deep in dust that the wind caught up in swirling clouds. At the end of a day over the hot roads of Illinois, the summer traveler would look more like a negro than a white man.

It was conditions such as these that Lincoln and his brother lawyers had to endure in traveling over the roads of the Eighth Judicial District. However, there was also a bright side. When they reached a town where court was to be held, it was usually a time for festival all round. The farmers had come to town to hear their cases, to act as witnesses, to serve

on juries, or just to see and hear. Court time was a time to meet old friends who had moved to other parts of the country, to learn the news, to hear the lawyers argue, to talk politics, and to tell stories.

This was the golden age of the story-teller. And Lincoln was the leader of every group wherever he was to be found. He knew more stories and could tell them better than anyone else,—an art he never lost to the day he died.

A man who was clerk of the court told a story of being fined for contempt of court. It was in the courtroom. Lincoln had just come in and leaned over the clerk's desk to tell him a new story. The clerk laughed so loudly that the judge (Judge David Davis) fined him five dollars for contempt of court. The clerk apologized and told the judge that the joke was worth the money.

"In a few minutes the judge called me to him. 'What was the story Lincoln told you?' he asked. I told him and he laughed aloud in spite of himself." Then the judge told the clerk he need not pay the fine. Evidently the story was worth more than the five dollars.

Often he used stories to illustrate a point in arguing a case before the judge and jury. And we may be sure that in that land of story-tellers a good joke

was often more effective than long quotations from the lawbooks. Judge W. H. Beckwith, who traveled over the circuit with Lincoln and afterwards wrote a book, *Personal Recollections of Lincoln*, tells of a case where this happened:

“A man, by vile words, first provoked and then made a bodily attack upon another. The latter in defending himself gave the other much the worst of the encounter. The aggressor, to get even, had the one who thrashed him tried in our circuit court upon a charge of assault and battery. Mr. Lincoln defended and told the jury that his client was in the fix of a man, who in going along the highway with a pitchfork on his shoulder was attacked by a fierce dog that ran at him from a farmer’s door-yard. In parrying off the brute with the fork, its prongs stuck into the brute and killed him.

“‘What made you kill my dog?’ said the farmer.

“‘What made him try to bite me?’

“‘But why did you not go at him with the other end of the pitchfork?’

“At this Mr. Lincoln whirled about in his long arm an imaginary dog and pushed its tail end toward the jury.”

At another time, he was appearing in a case so trivial that he refused to take it seriously. Instead,

he told a story about a fence that was so crooked, "that when a hog went through an opening in it, invariably it came out on the same side from whence it started." It didn't really have anything to do with the case, but the jury evidently agreed with Lincoln. At any rate, they gave a verdict for his man.

But it would be a mistake to think that Lincoln the lawyer spent his whole time telling stories and cracking jokes. When he was really in earnest no one could be more serious or work harder for his client. As a speaker in court he was usually simple in manner and language. He used few long words and never mixed in Latin phrases, as did many other lawyers of that time. He talked to juries and judges as he talked to men on the street, directly and to the point, interested only in making them understand what he was driving at. Once a lawyer on the other side used a Latin quotation and then turned to Lincoln: "Isn't that true, Mr. Lincoln?" —he said.

"If that is Latin," replied Lincoln, "you'll have to call another witness."

But Lincoln's cases were not all small and he did much more than tell stories and crack jokes. As we have shown, no one could work harder when there

was need. Men who traveled the circuit with him have told of this. Evenings in the tavern, Lincoln would be the center of a laughing group, usually telling the most and the best stories. While the others were still laughing at his latest yarn, Lincoln would slip away to his room where his room mate would find him later sitting over the fire, buried in study. Often he was the first up in the morning and would have an hour or two of thought and study before breakfast. More and more, he worked for justice and not merely for the winning of cases.

In 1850, he prepared a lecture on the law. Some of his notes are still in existence. Among them we can find this:

“Discourage litigation. Persuade your neighbors to compromise whenever you can. Point out to them how the nominal winner is often a real loser—in fees, expenses, and waste of time. As a peacemaker, the lawyer has a superior opportunity of being a good man. There will still be business enough.

“Never stir up litigation. A worse man can scarcely be found than one who does this. Who can be more nearly a fiend than he who habitually overhauls the register of deeds in search of defects of titles whereon to stir up strife and put money in his pocket? A moral tone ought to be in-

fused into the profession which should drive such men out of it."

Even in the practice of law, the question of slavery kept appearing. One of his earliest cases before the Supreme Court of Illinois, the highest court of the state, had to do with the freedom of a colored girl, named Nance, who had been sold by Nathan Cromwell of Tazewell County to a neighbor named Baily. Cromwell promised to produce papers showing that he had the right to make the sale. He failed to do this before his death, and Baily refused to pay for Nance. After the death of Cromwell, his heirs sued Baily for the money.

The case was carried to the Supreme Court of the State, and Lincoln argued it for Baily. He began by showing that the Northwest Ordinance, of which we have spoken before, had made the territory free before Illinois ever became a state. Then he quoted from the Constitution of Illinois a clause prohibiting slavery within the borders of the state. Finally, he concluded that no human being can be bought and sold in a free state. The court agreed with him. Nance was set free.

Not long after there was another case in which slavery was concerned. There was a free colored

woman in Springfield named Polly. Her son went to New Orleans as a hand on one of the river steam-boats. The people of the South were much aroused by the attacks of the Abolitionists and demanded that every ownerless negro should carry what were called "free papers." The boy had none and was thrown in prison as a runaway slave.

When the boat returned north, Polly learned what had happened to her son and went to Lincoln and his partner Herndon with the case and appealed for help to get the boy back. First they went to the Governor of Illinois. He heard them and then informed them that there was no law under which he could aid them. They appealed then to the Governor of Louisiana, the state in which New Orleans is located. He also said he was helpless. It looked as though the boy would lie in prison until he was forgotten. Then he would be sold to pay the expenses of keeping him in jail and would be a helpless slave for the rest of his life.

They went again to the Governor of Illinois who still refused to aid them. As Lincoln was leaving the room, he said to the Governor, "I'll make the ground in this country too hot for the foot of a slave, whether you have the legal power to secure the release of this boy or not."

Lincoln finally sent Herndon around among his friends and raised enough money to buy the boy back to freedom. We do not know how much money was needed, but a young, able-bodied negro often sold for a thousand dollars or even more. Probably nearly this much was required to bring Polly's son back to her.

The most important cases that Lincoln had to do with were those for the Illinois Central Railroad and for Cyrus McCormick, the inventor of the reaping machine. After he had won his case for the railroad, a very important one that saved the company many thousands of dollars, he sent in a bill for two thousand dollars. The man to whom he presented it said: "Why, this is as much as a first-rate lawyer would have charged."

This so annoyed Lincoln that he withdrew his bill altogether and asked other lawyers what they thought he should have charged. The leading lawyers of the state agreed that five thousand dollars, and not two, would have been a moderate fee. Lincoln sued the railroad company for five thousand dollars, and the company was forced to pay that sum.

The McCormick case was probably the largest and most important in which he had any part. It was tried at Cincinnati in a United States court, and

Lincoln seems to have had little part in it. The man who made the principal speech in court was a lawyer from Philadelphia, named Edwin M. Stanton. Stanton was not much impressed by Lincoln's appearance and manner and refused to call upon him for any help during the trial of the case.

After his return to Illinois, Lincoln told his partner Herndon he had overheard Stanton say, referring to him, "Where did that long-armed creature come from, and what can he expect to do in this case?" To someone else, Stanton referred to Lincoln as a "long, lank creature from Illinois, wearing a dirty linen duster for a coat, on the back of which the perspiration had splotched wide stains that resembled a map of the continent." Remember this when you learn that a few years later this same long, lank creature from Illinois made the man who spoke of him in that way Secretary of War and trusted him to the end. Petty jealousy and revenge had no part or place in Lincoln's make-up.

It was Lincoln's first experience with an Eastern lawyer and he was much impressed with Stanton's ability. Ralph Emerson, a young lawyer from Rockford, Illinois, who was present at the trial in Cincinnati, tells of this. Lincoln had listened to

Stanton's speech and, on the way back to his tavern with Emerson, he was silent and seemed greatly depressed.

"At last, he turned suddenly to me," says Emerson, "exclaiming, 'Emerson, I am going home. I am going home to study law.'

"'Why?' I exclaimed, 'Mr. Lincoln, you stand at the head of the bar in Illinois now! What are you talking about?'

"'Ah, yes,' he said, 'I do occupy a good position there, and I think that I can get along with the way things are done there now. But these college-trained men who have devoted their whole lives to study are coming west, don't you see? And they study their cases as we never do. They have got as far as Cincinnati now. They will soon be in Illinois.'

"Another long pause; then stopping and turning toward me, his countenance suddenly assuming that look of strong determination which those who knew him best sometimes saw on his face, he exclaimed: 'I am going home to study law! I am as good as any of them, and when they get out to Illinois, I will be ready for them.'"

That was characteristic of Lincoln. He was never

arrogant, never conceited or over-confident. Often he was saddened and depressed by the thought of his inferiority to other men he met. But his courage always came back and brought with it the determination to work and study and make himself level with the best.

All during the time he was busy with the law, he was studying other things as well. He was now past forty years of age, but he was not too old to settle down to learning things that other men had learned in school. He studied mathematics, astronomy, poetry, working over his lessons as though he were still a boy in school. He was always fond of poetry and, as a youth, had considerable skill in making rhymes for himself. As he grew older he acquired the habit of seeking out poems that pleased him and committing them to memory.

Beginning as a common laborer, he made himself first a store-keeper, then a surveyor, then a lawyer, and now he was on the way to the hardest task that confronted any man of his time. Few men of any time have carried heavier burdens than this son of poverty and ignorance and no one ever prepared himself by a harder course of work and self-discipline. No man better illustrates in his life the truth of the wise saying of old King Solomon:

"He that ruleth his spirit [is better] than he that taketh a city."

In the days when he was riding the circuit with the other lawyers in Illinois he missed no chance to add to his store of knowledge. When other lawyers sat about the tavern fire smoking and passing the time with stories, Lincoln would often steal away by himself. Another lawyer, H. C. Whitney, once asked him where he had been. Lincoln replied that he had heard of a magic lantern show being given to the children at the schoolhouse and had gone to see it.

"I told him I had seen all these sights at school," writes Mr. Whitney.

"'Yes,' he said sadly. 'I now have an advantage over you, for the first time in my life seeing these things which are, of course, common to those who had, what I did not, a chance at an education when they were young.'"

Remember that there were then no moving picture theatres. There were few theatres of any kind. Once in a great while a traveling company would come to Springfield to give plays in the schoolhouse or some small hall, often without a stage or curtain or footlights. The people furnished their own amusements or went without. And yet it is doubt-

ful if we to-day have such an advantage over the people of Lincoln's time as we often imagine. After all, the greatest advantage anyone can have is to be faced with hard tasks and given the courage to conquer them.

## CHAPTER XI

### SLAVERY COMES TO THE FRONT

WE have seen how from time to time the question of negro slavery kept showing its head in Lincoln's life and forcing itself on his attention. The time was coming fast when this and the other questions that were tied up with it were to fill his mind and the minds of all the other thoughtful men in the country. For over two hundred years black men had been slaves in free America. For the greater part of that time, most Americans had believed—if they thought about it at all—that the glorious phrases in the Declaration of Independence about all men being born free and equal applied only to those who had the luck to be born with white skins.

But we must look back for a moment to see how the right of ownership of human beings had been considered in the past. The first slaves were brought to Virginia from Africa in 1619. At that time and for a good many years after there had been no at-

tempt to prevent slavery. Even the colonies of New England permitted it, although it was on the big plantations of the South that the Negroes were found most useful. There were a good many men even before the Revolution who questioned the right of men to own other men and here and there slaves were set free.

After the Constitution of the United States was adopted, the question of the trade in slaves arose. It was finally decided that Negroes should no longer be brought into the United States after 1807. But nothing was done to interfere with slavery where it existed. We have seen how the Northwest Ordinance forbade slavery forever in the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

There was another step forward in 1820 when a bill was passed in Congress, called the Missouri Compromise. This was caused by the struggle over the admission of Missouri as a state. Finally it was agreed that Missouri should be allowed to hold slaves but that slavery should be prohibited in all other American territory north of the southern boundary of the state. Remember when you hear of the Missouri Compromise, that this is what men meant by that phrase.

Another thing that had made a great deal of

trouble in the North was the Fugitive Slave Law. This was a law by which the owner of a slave who had escaped into a free state could force the citizens of that state to help him to recover his property. Many people of the North objected violently and there were regular organizations formed to help runaway slaves across the Northern states into Canada. Once in Canada, they were safe. Routes were arranged and hiding places were fixed for the Negroes. These usually traveled by night and hid through the day.

There are many people in Ohio and Indiana and other Northern States who will tell you that their father's or grandfather's barn or cellar was a station on the Underground Railway, as these routes were called. Naturally, all this made the feeling between North and South still more bitter. The Southerners sincerely believed in their right to hold slaves and believed, too, that all these acts in the North were for the purpose of depriving them of their property.

We have seen that Lincoln had been slow to take a stand against slavery. He believed that the law should protect the slaveholders in the use of their human property. But he was coming to believe, too, as we have seen, that slavery was an evil and that

sooner or later the country would have to deal with it.

Something happened in 1854 that woke him from his dream of ending his life as a lawyer in Springfield, Illinois, and drove him back into politics. Thirty years before, men believed that they had settled something by the Missouri Compromise. But they found that it would not stay settled. As population was increasing in Kansas and Nebraska, these two territories were asking admission as states. By this time, Stephen A. Douglas was a senator from Illinois. He introduced a bill giving the people of Kansas and Nebraska the right to decide whether or not they should hold slaves. This was in spite of the fact that they were in the territory that had been declared forever free in 1820. In other words, he destroyed the Missouri Compromise. He called this Popular Sovereignty. His opponents called it Squatter Sovereignty because many settlers moved into Kansas and Nebraska not to make homes but merely for the sake of voting. These men were called "Squatters."

When Douglas came back to Illinois from Washington, he made a speech defending his action in killing the Missouri Compromise. Lincoln was called on to answer him. This was probably the first speech he ever made attacking slavery, although he was to make many more. Also it was really the first of the

Lincoln-Douglas debates of which we shall hear again very soon. It was delivered at Springfield. The two men met again in a few days at Peoria, and Douglas found so little support for his side of the argument in the meetings that he decided that he had had enough and refused to debate with Lincoln again. There is one paragraph in Lincoln's speech at Peoria that is worth quoting. It will help us to understand not only Lincoln, but also the principles of our own government.

"If the Negro is a man, is it not to that extent a total destruction of self-government to say that he too shall not govern himself? When the white man governs himself, that is self-government; but when he governs himself and also governs another man, that is more than self-government—that is despotism. If the Negro is a man, why, then, my ancient faith teaches me that 'all men are created equal' and that there can be no moral right in connection with one man making a slave of another."

All during this struggle with Douglas, Lincoln was thinking deeply about slavery and working over in his mind his own ideas. He knew that he must first be sure of what he himself thought, before he could teach others what to think. It was not in his nature to come to an easy decision. He must hammer

it out for himself. Judge Dickey was rooming with Lincoln in one of the court towns when the excitement over Kansas and Nebraska began. Miss Ida Tarbell tells the story as it came from the lips of the judge.

"There were two beds in our room, and I remember that Lincoln sat up in his night shirt on the edge of the bed arguing the point with me. At last, we went to sleep. Early in the morning, I woke up and there was Lincoln half sitting up in bed. 'Dickey,' he said, 'I tell you this nation cannot exist half slave and half free.' 'Oh, Lincoln,' said I, 'go to sleep.' "

But slavery was something that would not let him sleep.

It was at this time that Lincoln decided that he would try to go to the United States Senate. There are two senators from each state and a seat in the senate is a high and honorable position. There is not much to say about this first attempt of Lincoln's except that he failed. Illinois was slowly turning away from the Democratic party and that party was also being split in two, but men are slow to change, and Douglas was still the most powerful man in the state.

Lincoln was learning another lesson. This was that he could no longer call himself a Whig. That

party was dying; was, in fact, already dead. And there was going on the slow birth of another political party to take its place. In time, it was to be called Republican, but at the start there was no single name. Free Soil came as near covering it as any other label. The members of this party were directly opposed to slavery.

Early in 1856, there was a meeting at Decatur, Illinois, to discuss the formation of a new party. Most of the men in the convention were newspaper editors from various parts of the state. Lincoln who was there did not speak or take any part in the work of the meeting. Three months later, there was a convention at Bloomington to organize the party. This time Lincoln did speak, and it was one of the great speeches of his career. When he finished, his eyes were blazing and he was white with the strength of his feeling. Men and women cheered and wept and hung on every word. A man who heard him that day said afterwards: "At that moment, he was the handsomest man I ever saw." Think of that when men call Lincoln ugly.

Most speeches are dry reading. Not so this one. Listen to a brief bit taken from the middle of it.

"We will make converts day by day; we will grow strong by calmness and moderation; we will grow strong by the

violence and injustice of our adversaries. And, unless truth be a mockery and justice a hollow lie, we will be in the majority after a while, and then the revolution which we will accomplish will be none the less radical from being the result of pacific measures. The battle of freedom is to be fought out on principle. Slavery is a violation of the eternal right. We have temporized with it from the necessities of our condition, but as sure as God reigns and school children read, that black, foul lie can never be consecrated into God's hallowed truth."

At the end there was a stern warning to those Southerners who were talking of secession, of drawing out of the union of states that made the government of the United States.

"We must make this a land of liberty in fact, as it is in name. But in seeking to attain these results—so indispensable if the liberty which is our pride and boast shall endure—we will be loyal to the Constitution and to the 'flag of our Union,' and no matter what our grievance—even though Kansas shall come in as a slave State; and no matter what theirs—even if we shall restore the Compromise [Missouri Compromise]—we will say to the Southern disunionists, we won't go out of the Union, and you shan't."

When we read these quotations from that speech at Bloomington now, we can hardly understand the

excitement they must have caused. For years most men had talked in whispers about slavery, if they talked about it at all. The only people who dared stand up publicly and announce their beliefs in a loud voice were those who believed in slavery. Only the out and out Abolitionists in the North had had the courage of their opinions and they had attacked the government as violently as they attacked slavery.

Here at last was a man who called slavery a "black, foul lie" and at the same time declared his intention to uphold the government of the Union against the disunionists of the South—or any other section. This was to be the key-note of all Lincoln's speeches in the future.

## CHAPTER XII

### LINCOLN DEBATES WITH DOUGLAS

WE can see how Lincoln had been growing in the stature of his mind and in the strength of his beliefs through the years of his political work and his practice of the law. We can see it now because we know the whole story of this man's life. Seventy years ago, when these things were happening, many things were not so plain. Before a man can be nominated for the Presidency, he must be known outside the borders of his own state, and Lincoln was only an Illinois man.

To be sure, he had served a term in Congress and he had been seen in the East, but that was not enough. We must remember that in that day, even though railroads and telegraph lines were growing in number every year, there was still nothing like the conveniences for spreading news that there are to-day. Newspapers were small, and people outside the towns got most of their information by word of mouth. To-day it is not possible for anything

of importance to happen in any part of the country without every person who can read a newspaper knowing about it within twenty-four hours, and practically everyone reads the papers.

Lincoln knew that he was unknown outside of his own state. In June, 1856, when the first national nominating convention of the Republican party met in Philadelphia, word reached Springfield that a man named Lincoln had received one hundred and ten votes for nomination for the Vice-Presidency. When the news reached him, Lincoln was not greatly excited. In fact, he said indifferently that there was "another great man" of the same name in Massachusetts and it must be he. But it was Abraham Lincoln of Illinois who was meant.

That was as near as he came to the nomination, however. The first candidates of the Republican party were John C. Frémont, and William L. Dayton. Frémont was a soldier who had done distinguished work as an explorer in the Rocky Mountains. For a time, he seemed likely to be one of the great leaders of the new party. It was soon seen, however, that he lacked the strength and the steadiness that a real leader must possess.

It was not until two years later that something happened which brought Lincoln his first real na-

tional reputation. This was the year that he again became a candidate for the United States Senate, this time against Stephen A. Douglas, and had with Douglas a series of great debates that will be remembered as long as Americans read the history of their country. In all, there were seven meetings in Illinois, at which both men spoke. Here is the list of towns: Ottawa, Freeport, Jonesboro, Charleston, Galesburg, Quincy, and Alton. Take a map of the state of Illinois and find these towns. You will see how thoroughly the two candidates covered the state. There was hardly a person inside the state boundaries who did not have a chance to hear these great orators some time somewhere between August 21 and October 15, which were the dates between which the debates were held.

We must remember that these were not simply two men traveling about the country making speeches. The nation was on the threshold of a great crisis and at last men were awakening to the fact. When Lincoln was notified that he had been nominated for the Senate, he made a speech in Springfield that held the keynote of all the speeches that he was to make between then and election time. "A house divided against itself cannot stand. I

believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other."

Every day feeling was becoming stronger and more bitter. The men who listened to the debates between Lincoln and Douglas did not forget what was said there as soon as the speeches were over. Their words were remembered and, before many months had passed, they had entered into the fabric of thought of all men throughout the state and were being quoted all over the country. Wherever they went, there were enormous crowds. Farmers drove in for miles around, starting at dawn or before and winding their way slowly in over the rough, dusty prairie roads. They stood for hours in the sun and the dust, waiting for the meetings to begin. And they listened to the end.

Few people in those crowds could have realized what was happening. It was not possible to know. It was still not possible to imagine the great war that was to burst upon the country in three years and bring us to the verge of ruin. But everyone knew that there was nothing in men's minds that was more important than this question of slavery,

and many came for the first time to agree with Lincoln that it must be settled, that the country could not exist half slave and half free.

As the two men traveled about the state, speaking from the same platform as they did in the towns we have named—and speaking separately almost every day between the dates of the joint debates,—there were processions, bands, songs, banners, celebrations. Douglas traveled usually by special train, accompanied by his wife, a beautiful and charming woman. The Republicans had little money for campaign expenses, and their candidate had to travel as he could, by freight train, if nothing better offered. Where there was no railroad, he traveled by carriage. In some towns, Lincoln's supporters, to show how democratic they were, hauled their man through the streets in a large hay-wagon.

Campaigns were not much different then in appearance from what they are now. There was a great deal of noise and fireworks, brass bands and shouting, "fizzlegigs and fireworks," as Lincoln called them. Miss Tarbell, in her *Life of Lincoln*, quotes some of the mottoes that were on the banners that were carried for Lincoln:

“Illinois, born under the Ordinance of '87.”

“Free territories and Free Men,  
Free pulpits and Free Preachers,  
Free Press and a Free Pen,  
Free Schools and Free Teachers.”

“Westward the star of empire takes its way ; The girls link  
on to Lincoln, their mothers were for Clay.”

“Abe the Giant-Killer”

“Edgar County for the Tall Sucker”

The early inhabitants of Illinois were called “suckers,” hence Lincoln was the “Tall Sucker.” One explanation of the term is that the first travelers across the wide prairies in dry times could get water only by sucking it from crawfish holes through a straw, in the dry bed of prairie sloughs.

Probably Lincoln never really hoped to defeat Douglas in the race for Senate. At this distance, it is hard to believe that there was any man in Illinois more powerful and popular than Lincoln. But there was such a man in 1858, and that man was Stephen A. Douglas. From the first day when he landed at Vandalia, with thirty-seven cents in his pocket, his career had been one of success. Every-

thing he tried brought him greater fame and power. Everywhere he went he increased his popularity. Never had he been beaten for public office. No wonder he had come to believe that he had only to try—and success was there waiting for him.

Lincoln said of himself: "With me, the race of ambition has been a failure—a flat failure. With him, it has been one of splendid success."

The same thing held true in this contest for the Senate. Again Douglas won. But Lincoln had done one thing that he set out to accomplish. He had warned the people of the state that they must sooner or later deal with slavery, or it would deal with them. And he had made men outside the state, men all over the country, realize that here was someone who must be heard. This struggle that he had lost was only a single battle and the war was just beginning. He was reported as saying: "I am after larger game; the battle of 1860 is worth a hundred of this." The next election for the Presidency was to be held in 1860.

There is no denying that Lincoln was ambitious. It was ambition that had brought him up the long road from the log cabin where he sprawled in front of the fire and read the few tattered books that he could borrow. It was ambition that had led him

from rail-splitting to store-keeping and then had driven him on to the study of law. It was ambition that carried him into the state Legislature and to Congress.

He had finished his single term in Congress at Washington apparently convinced that there was no political future for him. In that spirit he had gone back to the practice of law, expecting to finish his days among his friends in Illinois.

Now he had come to the end of the road of self-seeking and of personal ambition. Wherever he went, he heard men talking of the growing evil of slavery and, as he talked and listened, he thought. The end of his thinking was the firm conviction that the government could not exist half slave and half free. Freedom was not a thing that could be divided, not a thing that could be given to one set of men and held away from another.

Along with this belief, in which he never wavered after he had once formed it, went the courage to stand up before his fellow citizens and speak out what was in his mind. When many others hesitated and tried to find a way that should be easier, a way that would spare the feelings of the South and the North alike, he spoke out boldly for direct dealing. In a speech at Cooper Union, in New York, in the

winter of 1859, after he had been beaten for the senatorship, he stated his position so clearly for the whole country that from that time on there was no possibility for any man in the country not to know where Abraham Lincoln stood.

“Let us be diverted by none of those sophistical contrivances wherewith we are so industriously plied and belabored,” he said, “contrivances such as groping for some middle ground between the right and the wrong; vain as the search for a man who should be neither a living man nor a dead man; such as a policy of ‘don’t care’ on a question about which all true men do care; such as Union appeals beseeching true Union men to yield to Disunionists, reversing the Divine rule, and calling, not the sinners, but the righteous to repentance; such as invocations to Washington imploring men to unsay what Washington said and undo what Washington did.

“Neither let us be slandered from our duty by false accusations against us, nor frightened from it by menaces of destruction to the government, nor of dungeons to ourselves. Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it.”

After the speech at Cooper Union Lincoln traveled up into New England and spoke to large audi-

ences in New Hampshire and Connecticut. It was the first time the East had had a chance to hear him and everywhere he went men were attracted by what he had to say and his way of saying it. They had heard of Lincoln during the debates with Douglas, but few of them knew what he looked like. They knew that he was born of poverty and that he knew nothing of schools. They had expected a crude, unlettered backwoodsman, a teller of rough stories, perhaps a man with a politician's quickness of joke and retort.

They heard and saw none of these things. Instead they listened to a serious statement of a great question; they heard a man say in simple, powerful words what many of them only dimly knew in their own hearts. They went away from the meetings more in earnest and with more knowledge than when they came. This was the real beginning of Lincoln's national popularity. From that time he was no longer merely an Illinois lawyer and a defeated candidate for office. Men were turning to him as the leader of the movement against slavery.

It is difficult to say who it was that first suggested the name of Lincoln for President. While he was still debating with Douglas and long before it was known that he would not be elected to the Senate, a

citizen of Springfield named Jesse W. Fell was traveling in the East. He saw the impression that Lincoln's speeches were making there and he answered many questions about this new man in Illinois.

When he came back he told Lincoln that he could be President. This was hard for Lincoln to believe. He declared, "There is no such good luck in store for me as the Presidency of these United States." That was all he would say. In his opinion there were many men who were more deserving than he and who would make stronger candidates, and he named William H. Seward, of New York, and Salmon P. Chase, of Ohio. "Everybody knows them; nobody scarcely outside of Illinois knows me."

It was Lincoln's friends in Illinois who tended the fire for Lincoln during the next year. Wherever they went, they talked Lincoln and answered questions about him. One of them, "Long John" Wentworth, editor of the *Chicago Democrat*, wrote about him: "In our opinion the Great Man of Illinois is Abraham Lincoln, and none other than Abraham Lincoln."

Then Lincoln learned that the nearly thirty years of hard work through the state was bearing fruit. Wherever he had gone as a flatboatman, surveyor, soldier, lawyer, politician, men remembered him.

Best of all, they knew him as the man who had dared stand up against Douglas, the Little Giant, the most famous orator in the state, the man who had never been beaten.

That Presidential Campaign of 1860 is worth remembering. It was the first time the votes of the new states of the West had counted for much. In the years before it had been the East or the South that held the balance. The powerful leaders had all been from one of these two sections and it was hard for men to believe that a raw state like Illinois could furnish a man fit for the Presidency, especially at such a time when the most serious questions that had ever come up must be decided.

The time came in May, 1860, when the state of Illinois had to decide on the man they were going to support in the national convention. The meeting at which this was to be done was held at Decatur, a town not far from Springfield. Lincoln was seated on the platform as a spectator when Richard Oglesby, afterwards governor of the state, announced that Macon County had a contribution to offer. Then there entered two men bearing strange banners. These were nothing but two old fence rails covered with bright streamers. On them was this inscription:

## ABRAHAM LINCOLN

The Rail Candidate

For President in 1860

Two rails from a lot of 3,000 made in 1830, by Thos. Hanks and Abe Lincoln—whose father was the first pioneer of Macon County.

Lincoln was called on for a speech and said:

“I suppose I am expected to reply to that. I cannot say whether I made those rails or not, but I am quite sure I have made a great many just as good.”

There was no doubt that Illinois was for Lincoln, but there was considerable doubt about the rest of the country. In the East, many men could not yet believe in the man from Illinois. In the lists of possible candidates, published in the newspapers, the name of Lincoln seldom appeared and then only far down near the foot. It was no wonder that Lincoln still looked upon the talk for him as merely the praise of good friends.

The National Convention to nominate the Republican candidate that year was held in Chicago. This was a point in Lincoln's favor since it was not far from his home and was in a state where he was well known, but his friends took no chances and left noth-

ing undone that could be made to help the cause of their candidate. Then, as now, preparations were made in advance to be sure that there was plenty of applause for each man when his name was mentioned. Men were hired to come early to the Convention Hall where they could get the best seats and be ready to cheer for the man of their hirers' choice. The delegates from New York had even brought a leader for their hired cheerers, a man who had been a prize-fighter and had become a small politician. Someone called him "a sort of white black-bird."

Illinois went New York one better. On the day the nominations were to be made, the New York men were marching about the streets, making a tremendous racket with bands and cheers. The Illinois men meanwhile went quietly about hiring all the men with loud voices they could find. These they smuggled into the hall while New York was still parading the streets. The result was that when the New York delegation appeared, there was no room near the platform for their crew of hired rooters, as they would be called to-day.

But this was only a small part of the work that was done there. In the earlier days of the convention, the Lincoln men worked day and night for their candidate. They visited the delegations from other

states and argued with them for Lincoln. Wherever they could find a man who was uncertain about his vote, they literally sat up nights with him, until they had won him over or were convinced that there was no chance. Some of the delegates from the East proposed to make Lincoln candidate for Vice-President, with William H. Seward as candidate for the Presidency. The Illinois men promptly squelched this idea. It was the Presidency or nothing for Lincoln, they declared.

It was necessary for a candidate to have two hundred and thirty-four votes,—a majority of the total votes in the convention,—before he could be nominated. The voting began and instantly the cheering stopped. This was serious business. It was votes that counted now and not noise. Lincoln's friends had believed that he would have a hundred votes on the first ballot. He had a hundred and two. According to the practice in nominating conventions, it is necessary to keep on voting until someone is chosen.

On the next ballot Pennsylvania swung over to the man from Illinois, and his total was now a hundred and eighty-one. The slide to Lincoln was beginning, and the New York delegation sat pale and silent as they saw their man losing, while the Illinois



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Abraham Lincoln as a rail splitter



men leaped up with rapturous cheers and tossed their hats and coats in the air. The third ballot was taken, and the word was whispered around the great hall that Lincoln's vote had risen to two hundred and thirty-one and a half, two and a half votes short of the nomination.

Ohio had been voting for Salmon P. Chase, a distinguished citizen from that state. The head of the Ohio delegation rose and caught the chairman's eye. "Mr. President," he shouted, "I rise to change four votes from Mr. Chase to Mr. Lincoln."

It took the great crowd a moment to realize what had happened. Abraham Lincoln had been nominated for the Presidency. The rail-splitter had come all that long road from the days of poverty in the open-faced camp in the Indiana forests. The man who had steered a flatboat down the Mississippi was to be given his chance to stand at the helm of the government of the United States.

There was noise enough and to spare as soon as the convention realized what had happened. Men shouted and tossed hats and canes into the air. They stood and cheered themselves hoarse while tears rained down their cheeks. A man on the roof shouted the news to a man in the street outside and the

crowds that were waiting took up the shout. Cannons boomed, and whistles and bells caught up the clamor.

Meanwhile, what was Lincoln doing? He had refused to go to Chicago while the convention was being held, but he could hardly wait to hear the news. Once between visits to the telegraph office to see what was happening in the convention, he went into the office of a friend and threw himself on a lounge that stood there. "Well, I guess I'll go back to the practice of law," he said.

The news of his nomination came to him in the street. He was on an errand for his wife when the result of the third ballot was flashed over the telegraph wire. A small boy broke out of the crowd around the telegraph office and rushed down the street, shouting: "Mr. Lincoln, Mr. Lincoln, you are nominated!"

Lincoln stood for a few minutes to receive the congratulations of the friends who promptly surrounded him. Then he said, "My friends, I am glad to receive your congratulations and as there is a little woman down on Eighth Street who will be glad to hear the news, you must excuse me until I inform her." And he hurried away to tell Mrs. Lincoln of the high honor that had come to him.

## CHAPTER XIII

### HE IS ELECTED PRESIDENT

BUT the work was only half done. Lincoln was nominated, but before he could sit in the White House he must be elected. His party was enthusiastic in his support, but this was not all. The Democratic Party was threatened with a division in its own ranks. Douglas had gone as far as he dared in his attempt to satisfy the South. Now he and his friends in the North realized that the limit had been reached. The Democratic party met for their convention in 1860 at Charleston, South Carolina.

From the first day there was a sharp division between the North and the South. The Southerners were determined that the platform which was to be adopted should support the right of slaveholders to carry their slaves into any state or territory without interference from a state or the national government. The Northerners were equally determined that nothing of the sort should be done. As a result, the convention broke up in a violent quarrel and no nomina-

tion was made. Fresh conventions were held in Baltimore two months later. Here the Northern Democrats nominated Douglas for President and Herschel V. Johnson, of Georgia, for Vice-President. The Southern Democrats named John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky for President, and Joseph Lane of Oregon, for Vice-President. This helped Lincoln. In fact, it made it almost certain that with the Democratic vote divided, Lincoln would be elected.

Nevertheless, the campaign was a hot one. The people who were opposed to Lincoln made much of his scanty education, his awkwardness, his lack of what they called culture. His friends turned these arguments other end to. The fact that he had been a rail-splitter and a boatman on the Mississippi, they said, was in his favor. No man who was not possessed of great ability could have risen from such humble beginnings to the point of being a candidate for the Presidency. An argument like this was a good one in America. There were too many men who had worked hard with their hands in their youth for talk about plowing and rail-splitting to count for much against Lincoln.

Clubs were organized all through the North to support Lincoln. Many of them wore badges showing the candidate splitting rails or steering a flatboat.



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Copy of an old portrait of Mary Todd Lincoln



Many of these clubs were called Wide-Awakes. They marched in processions carrying torches and wearing capes and caps of oilcloth. Frequently as they marched they moved back and forth across the street in zig-zag fashion imitating the lines of the rail fences for which Lincoln had split rails. In Hartford, Connecticut, may still be seen some of the original rails that Lincoln had split and also the maul with which he drove the wedges that split them.

There were many songs and poems written for use in the campaign, most of them not very good as poetry, but all of them full of patriotic enthusiasm for the man about whom they were written. One of the best was "The Quakers Are Out," written by John G. Whittier, the Quaker poet of New England, a devoted enemy of slavery:

Give the flags to the winds!  
Set the hills all aflame!  
Make way for the man with  
The Patriarch's name!  
Away with misgiving—away  
With all doubt.  
For Lincoln goes in when the  
Quakers are out!

While all this was going on, Lincoln spent the

summer and fall quietly at his home and his office in Springfield. He was the same simple, unpretentious person he had always been. Famous men from all over the country came to visit him. He received them cordially and talked with them quietly. His door was always open and whoever wanted to see him walked in and made themselves at home.

The mail was piled high on his table and when his visitors gave him time, he opened letters and newspapers, read what people had to say to or about him and, when he could, he answered the letters. His work required that he have more assistance than he had ever had before and he secured a secretary, John G. Nicolay. Mr. Nicolay was his chief secretary after he became President and in later years he and another secretary, John Hay, wrote what is probably the greatest life of Lincoln that has yet been printed.

We may be sure that all of his old friends who could get to Springfield at this time came in to shake his hand and wish him well. One story is told of an old lady who appeared one day carrying a brown paper parcel. She unrolled it and took out a pair of woolen socks, which she handed to Lincoln. "I wanted to give you somethin', Mr. Linkin," she said,

"to take to Washington, and that's all I hed. I spun that yarn and knit them socks myself."

Lincoln thanked her gravely and held up the socks so that the other men in the room might see them. "The lady got my latitude and longitude about right, didn't she, gentlemen?" he said.

Many people urged Lincoln to make speeches and to state his views about this question and that. His regular answer was that he had already done this many times. If there was anyone in the country who did not know how he stood on slavery and secession, it was because they had not read his speeches. It was now the time for work and for voting and not for talking. "The time comes upon every public man when it is best for him to keep his lips closed," said Lincoln. "That time has come upon me."

But while the election of Lincoln seemed sure, it was a nerve-racking time, nevertheless. Nine of the Southern states had not been represented in the convention that nominated him and two or three of them had already given the rest of the country clearly to understand that if Lincoln were elected they would probably withdraw from the Union.

A Senator and one of the most prominent poli-

ticians in the South, William H. Crawford, of Georgia, was exclaiming almost daily: "We will never submit to the inauguration of a Black Republican President."

As the story of Lincoln's life was spread through the North, the enthusiasm for him grew and grew. Here was a model for every poor man to lay before his sons. Lincoln had been poor, desperately poor, so that he saw little money of any kind until he was nearly grown. He was without education and he had nourished his mind on few books. But now his fame was greater than that of any of the educated, well-to-do, powerful leaders from the East. The South called him poor white, and the North answered back that he was of their kind, born of their soil and grown out of the same hard toil that the rest of them had known.

On election night, the news came in slowly and it was not until after midnight that word came that New York City had gone for Lincoln. That seemed to make it certain. Lincoln and his closest friends had withdrawn to a quiet room where they could receive the news in peace. Here he waited a little longer while the town outside went mad with joy. When he went home toward morning, the streets were filled with a rioting, happy throng, and he knew that

the impossible had happened—he was President of the United States.

As soon as it was known that Lincoln had been elected the South began to prepare for the next step, which was secession. When our government was founded, nearly a hundred and fifty years ago, there were no railroads. All travel was by stage-coach and on horseback. Roads were bad and many weeks might be consumed in journeying from New England or the remoter parts of the South to Washington. Therefore, it had been made the law that the President who was elected on the first Tuesday after the first Monday of November should not take his seat until the fourth of March, four months later. This was in order to give him time to settle his private affairs and make the long trip to Washington.

No one could have foreseen that this long wait would some time come near wrecking the government. That was what happened after Lincoln was elected. The man who was then President and who would continue so until the fourth of March, 1861, was James Buchanan. He was a Northerner and had little sympathy with the cause of secession. But he was an old man with little force or energy. Besides, he was unwilling to do anything to antagonize either party. So he did nothing at all.

On November 10, 1860, only four days after the election, the two senators from South Carolina resigned. Six weeks afterwards a convention was held in the state and what was called an Ordinance of Secession was passed. This meant that the citizens of South Carolina had declared that they were no longer a part of the United States, but had a government of their own. If they were right, South Carolina was as much a foreign country as was England or France. The only place in the whole state where the stars and stripes still flew was over Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor. Here there was a handful of Union soldiers commanded by Major Robert Anderson. We have heard of him before when he swore Abraham Lincoln into the service of the United States at the time of the Black Hawk War.

By the end of January, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, and Louisiana had followed the example of South Carolina and, like that state, had declared that they were no longer a part of the government of the United States. In February, 1861, the seceding states went still further. Representatives met at Montgomery, Alabama, and organized a new government called the Confederate States of America. The South had taken the first step—and a

long one it was. It remained to be seen what the North would do in answer to this challenge from below the Mason and Dixon line.

The first feeling in the North was one of disbelief. Men had heard threats from the South during the campaign, but few had taken them seriously. For nearly eighty years the Union had stood firmly through wars and difficulties of every kind. Now it was hard to believe that the South, which had always been loyal and patriotic through every trial, was trying to break up the Union which it had helped to form. Remember, too, that men were not so certain then as they are to-day that the government of the Union had a right to keep states in the Union against their will. There were many men, North as well as South, who sincerely thought that when the people of a state wanted to pull out, there was no right anywhere to force them to stay in.

While the Southern States were seceding and preparing to defend themselves if necessary, President Buchanan, who still sat in the White House, did nothing to prevent them. Worse still, some of the members of his cabinet helped the seceding states. The Secretary of War, John B. Floyd, was a Southerner and actively sympathetic with the

Southern cause. By his orders, large quantities of guns and ammunition were taken away from arsenals and forts in the North and sent South, where they could easily be seized by the Confederates in case of war.

As soon as this was discovered, the people of the North were aroused to a fuller sense of the danger that faced them. An order was issued to transfer a hundred and twenty-three cannon from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to a Southern city. The people of Pittsburgh learned of this in time and protested so vigorously that President Buchanan was forced to issue another order leaving the cannon where they were.

But this was only a drop in the bucket. All through the winter, after the election of Lincoln, the South went on preparing for war and the North did nothing. The regular army was very small, only about sixteen thousand men, and it was scattered all over the country. Besides, it was doubtful if all the officers and men in that small force would support the government. Many of them were from the South and would probably go with their native states rather than with the national government to which they had sworn allegiance. As a matter of fact, many officers of the army and navy did join the



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The stepmother of Abraham Lincoln



Confederacy and fight against the government they had sworn to support.

The days passed swiftly and the time came for Lincoln to leave Springfield for Washington. This was one of the saddest moments of his life. He had been a citizen of Springfield for twenty-five years. It was there that he had made his home and found his closest friends. The future was dark and uncertain to him. South of the Ohio River, the clouds of war were gathering more darkly every day, and he had no means of knowing how well the North would support him in an effort to hold the Southern states in the Union by force, if that should become necessary.

There were still many prominent men in the North who did not believe the union of states was worth a war. Horace Greeley, the editor of the *New York Tribune*, then the most powerful newspaper in the United States, was a leader in this movement. Over and over again he repeated his phrase: "Let the erring sisters depart in peace."

Before leaving Illinois, Lincoln gave proof that he was a dutiful son. His step-mother, now a very old woman, was living at Farmington, about one hundred miles from Springfield. He slipped away from his friends and spent a few days at Farming-

ton. He also visited his father's grave and gave orders for a suitable stone to mark the spot.

It was February 11th, when Lincoln left Springfield. There was a crowd at the station to see him off, and we may be sure that he knew practically every face that looked up at him as he stood on the platform of the car that was to carry him away. They were all his friends, and he had few friends in the place to which he was going. He spoke to them briefly in words that are worth remembering.

“My friends, no one, not in my situation, can appreciate my feeling of sadness at this parting. To this place and the kindness of these people I owe everything. Here I have lived a quarter of a century and have passed from a young to an old man [he was fifty-two years old the day after he made this speech]. Here my children have been born and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when or whether ever I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Without the assistance of that Divine Being who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance, I cannot fail. Trusting in Him, who can go with me, and remain with you, and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To His care commanding you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell.”

It was almost a prophecy. He was never to see Springfield again.

The journey eastward was one long ovation. At every stop, Indianapolis, Cincinnati, Columbus, Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Albany, New York, there were crowds waiting for him and there were loud and long cheers for the few brief speeches he made. His heart must have been lightened by these signs that the plain people of the country were behind him and would stand by him, in whatever way he found necessary to save the Union that had been put into his hands.

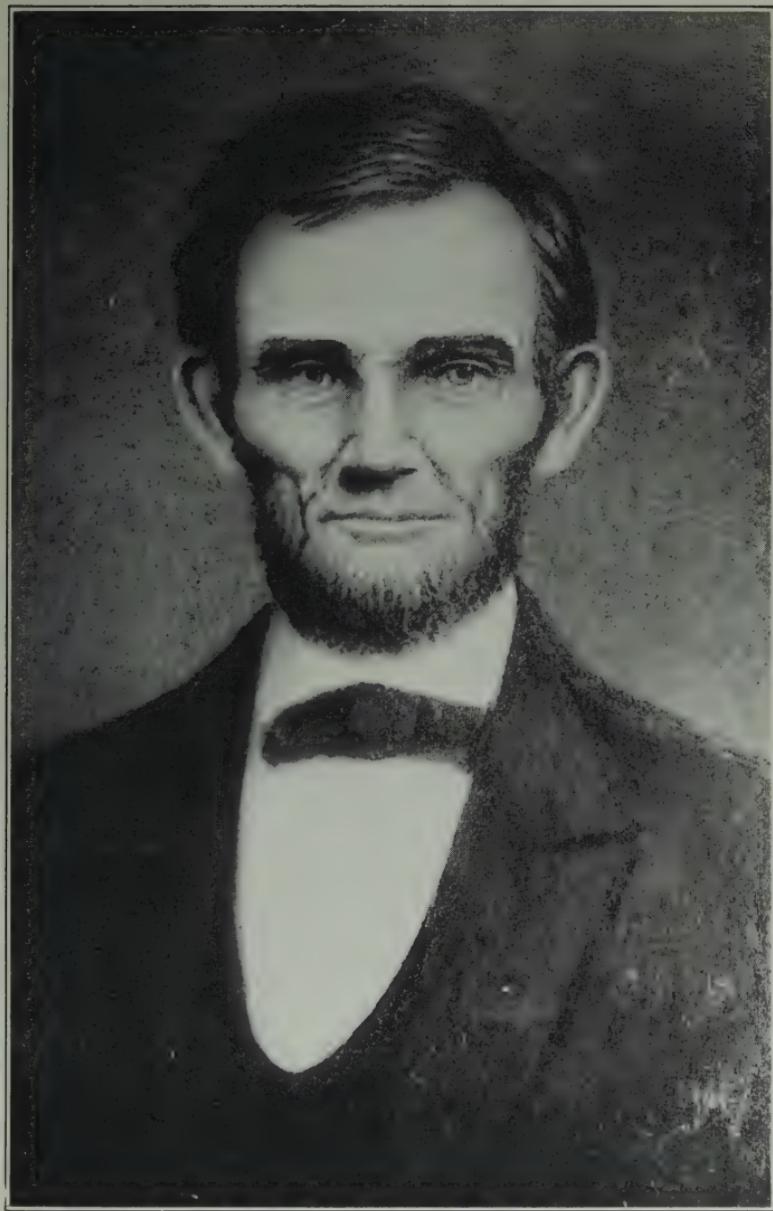
As he drew nearer Washington, word came to him that a plot had been made to kill him before he could be inaugurated President. His friends warned him that it was serious and that he must be careful. Allan Pinkerton, afterwards a great detective, undertook to see him safely into Washington. The last lap of the journey from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, to Washington was made secretly and he reached the capital city at six o'clock in the morning. There were no crowds to meet him here, no bands, no speeches. Quietly he was taken to the hotel where he was to spend the nine days that must still pass before his inauguration.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE WAR BEGINS

**T**HREE were still rumors of a plot to assassinate him on the day of his inauguration, and old General Scott, who was then in command of the army, had taken special pains to protect him. Pennsylvania Avenue, the main street of Washington, along which the inaugural procession passed, was lined with troops and there were riflemen stationed at various points, on rooftops, in the Capitol itself, wherever they could be held in readiness for the instant need. There was no trouble and the inauguration ceremonies passed off in good order.

A little thing happened just before Lincoln began his speech that must have touched him as much as anything that occurred that day. Stephen A. Douglas, the man who had fought him all his life, the man who had beaten him for the Senate and whom he had beaten for the Presidency, was seated on the platform. When the new President came forward to read his speech, he carried his high silk



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Abraham Lincoln as he looked at the age of fifty-two as sketched by Freeman Thorp. The only portrait of Lincoln drawn entirely from life.



hat and looked around helplessly for a place to put it. Douglas stepped forward and took it and held it through the speech. "If I can't be President," he whispered to someone near him, "I can at least hold the President's hat."

The whole country had waited for the President's speech. By this time the feeling had grown almost to certainty that there must be war. Already seven states had left the Union and more were threatening. Virginia was still doubtful. If she went out, there would be rebel soil in sight of the White House and rebel flags flying almost at the President's door. What would Lincoln say about Secession in his inaugural speech?

Read the last paragraph.

"I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

The deed that fired the anger of the North was the capture of Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor.

Here Major Robert Anderson with a handful of soldiers kept the American flag flying in what was now enemy's country. The people of Charleston had informed the government at Washington that if any attempt was made to send food or ammunition to Anderson and his men, they would look upon it as a declaration of war and would attack the fort. Anderson reported that they were nearly out of food and would soon be starved out if nothing more was sent them.

Finally ships started from New York, loaded with supplies for Sumter. As soon as this was known at Charleston, the bombardment of the fort was begun and lasted through the day. This was on April 12th. The Union garrison fought back as well as they could, but they were few in number and their ammunition was soon spent. Then the fort was surrendered. The war had begun.

Many people in the South had believed that the North was afraid to fight. Others said that Northerners cared for nothing but money and that they would never spend it on a war. They learned their mistake when the news of the fall of Sumter was made known. The President called at once for 75,000 volunteers for the army and navy. In a few days, over ninety thousand had enlisted. Troops

were offered faster than the government could take care of them. Railroads volunteered to help; banks and great merchants came forward with money; manufacturers offered supplies of every kind. If it was to be war, the men who had elected Lincoln were ready to give him the army that he needed.

In a speech before the Illinois legislature, Douglas, the old opponent of the President, left no doubt as to where he stood. When war is threatened, he declared, the only answer to secession is troops in the field with arms in their hands. From then until he died, he supported Lincoln with all the great strength and influence that he still had.

Politics is a dry subject at best, and there are many things about this great war that can now well be forgotten. But we must not overlook the real cause of the war that was beginning now and was to last for four weary years. This cause was secession. It was not slavery. Many men in the North hated slavery and in time they might have tried to find some way of ending it. But the war was not fought for the purpose of freeing the black men. It was fought to prevent the Southern states from leaving the Union.

Lincoln knew this from the first day and he never turned his eyes away from that fact. The war had

been going on for more than a year when he wrote a letter to a newspaper editor that makes this too clear for doubt.

"I would save the Union," said Lincoln. "I would save it in the shortest way under the Constitution. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union."

But we must not believe that all the people in the North were agreed and cheerful in their support of the President. Many of the powerful Republican politicians of the East were doubtful of his ability to carry on the work of the Presidency. One of the most famous of these was William H. Seward. Mr. Seward was a man of great ability and a patriot. He had held high office and no one was more trusted than he.

Lincoln had made him Secretary of State, the most important position among the President's advisers. Seward had accepted because he believed that he was the best man in the country to hold

such a post. In fact, he believed that he would be the real President while Lincoln held office and signed the papers of State.

Believing this, it was not remarkable that, a few days after Lincoln's inauguration, Seward drew up a long list of the things that he thought the President should do. This was just another way of saying: "Mr. President, I know that you are a good man and that you want to save the country, but you don't know how to do it. I am also a good man and I know what to do. Follow my advice and all will come out right in the end."

Mr. Lincoln knew what was in Seward's mind and his reply made it clear that the man in the White House was also the President of the United States in the full meaning of the term. Two months later, Seward wrote to his wife: "The President is the best of us." He had been quick to learn his lesson. Gradually others who were close to the President realized the same truth that had dawned upon Seward.

There were many dark days in store for Abraham Lincoln, days of doubt and discouragement, days when his burdens seemed heavier than he could bear. But there never was a day when he did not see his duty plain as a road before him. That duty was to

crush rebellion and save the Union. That, he knew, must be done whatever else was lost. A government that could not save itself was not worth serving.

The fall of Fort Sumter fired the South as well as the North. The states that had been hesitating, North Carolina, Virginia, Arkansas, Texas, Tennessee, joined the Confederacy, and Kentucky and Missouri were doubtful. The hardest blow of all was the loss of Virginia. The home of Washington and Jefferson, of Madison and Monroe, Virginia had been called the Mother of Presidents. From the beginning of American history, this state had taken a high and honorable place. Her statesmen had been foremost at Washington and her sons had been among the ablest officers and soldiers in the army and navy. That this state should join those in rebellion and seek to tear down the flag that she had so bravely helped to raise was hard to bear.

And there was a practical side to the secession of Virginia that Lincoln was quick to see. Only the Potomac River divided this state from Washington. Arlington, the home of Robert E. Lee, soon to be named as the leader of the armies of the South, could be seen from the White House lawn. What was to prevent a Southern army from gathering on Virginia soil and marching to attack Washington?

The people of Washington, in the spring of 1861, felt this as a real danger. There were only about twenty-five hundred Union soldiers in the city and rumors came across the Potomac that a large force of Confederates was marching to attack the capital. The telegraph wires had been torn down and little news reached Lincoln. What did come was bad. The Sixth Massachusetts regiment coming to the defense of the President was attacked by a mob in the streets of Baltimore, April 19; four soldiers were killed and several wounded. They kept on their way, however, and were the first of the new volunteers to reach Washington.

The next day citizens of Baltimore came to the President and objected to troops marching through their city to fight the Southerners. Lincoln suggested that the troops be marched around the city, saying as he did so, "If I grant you this concession, that no troops shall pass through the city, you will be back here to-morrow, demanding that none shall be marched around it."

He was right. The Baltimore people now objected to troops marching through Maryland at all, saying that their feet polluted the sacred soil of the state. Lincoln's answer was prompt. "We must have troops; and as they can neither crawl under

Maryland, nor fly over it, they must march across it."

Then the good people of Baltimore destroyed the railroad bridges near the city and tore up the railroad so that troops could not pass. This shut in Washington, for all the world like a city under siege. Not only were troops kept out, but food also. There was actual danger of famine. Barricades were built in the streets to hold back the Confederates if they should come, and food of all kinds was seized by the authorities so that people might not starve.

There were vague rumors of troops on the way that were contradicted almost as fast as they were set afloat. The Seventh Regiment of the New York militia was supposed to be coming but no one seemed to know where it was. Talking one day to a group of the Massachusetts soldiers, Lincoln said: "I begin to believe that there is no North. The Seventh Regiment is a myth. Rhode Island is another. You are the only real thing." Hour by hour he walked the floor of his office, saying to himself over and over, "Why don't they come? Why don't they come?"

Finally, after nearly a week had passed in this suspense, the whistle of a locomotive was heard. The Seventh New York had come. They had rebuilt the railroad track almost all the way from

Baltimore, building bridges and working day and night. The railroad was working again and troops were coming. Washington was safe. Few now remember that there was a time when the national capital was so near danger of capture by the Confederates.

Troops were coming fast now. Inside of two months and a half, after the President's first call for volunteers to defend the flag, there were over three hundred thousand men on the list and being trained. But it takes more than masses of men to make an army. It takes more than guns and waving of flags and stump speeches and cheering. It takes drill and training and hard work. And it takes ammunition, quantities of it. The North had the men in an apparently endless number, but it still had to make an army.

As fast as they could be moved, the men were gathered in training camps,—the making of an army began. Many of them were in and around Washington, and every hour that the President could steal away from his work he spent with the young fighters. He, more than anyone else, knew that the future of the country lay now with these men, many of them only boys, who carried muskets or rode the cannon into action. He tried new rifles with his own hands.

He took a close interest in the tests that were made of the possibility of using balloons in war.

There were, of course, no aeroplanes then, and no thought of them. Nor was there any radio or even telephone. But Lincoln was determined that no new invention that could be made useful in war should go without its chance.

Every particle of news that reached Washington from the North or the South was welcomed at once by the President and closely studied. Often he went in search of it himself. The building of the War Department stood near the White House, and Lincoln was a constant visitor there, reading the dispatches as they came off the telegraph instrument. We can thank Miss Tarbell for the following story told by William B. Wilson, who was in the military telegraph office through the war. Mr. Wilson had been sent to the White House with an important message. Mr. Lincoln decided to go back to the War Department to send his reply direct.

“Calling one of his two younger boys to join him, we then started from the White House, between stately trees, along a gravel path which led to the rear of the old War Department building. It was a warm day, and Mr. Lincoln wore, as part of his

costume, a faded gray linen duster which hung loosely around his long gaunt frame; his kindly eye was beaming with good nature, and his ever-thoughtful brow was unruffled. We had barely reached the gravel walk before he stooped over, picked up a round smooth pebble and, shooting it off his thumb, challenged us to a game of 'followings,' which we accepted. Each in turn tried to hit the outlying stone, which was being constantly projected onward by the President. The game was short, but exciting; the cheerfulness of childhood, the ambition of young manhood, and the gravity of the statesmen were all injected into it. The game was not won until the steps of the War Department were reached."

It was things like this that made it hard for many people to understand Lincoln. They thought that the President of the United States should wear a long face and walk with a slow, dignified step at all times. Few realized how these moments of play helped him to bear the heavy burdens. No one knew better than he how heavy these burdens were.

The soldiers in the camps were not long in finding out that the man in the White House was always interested in them and always ready to hear and help

with their troubles. All through the war he sympathized with the common soldier. Literally, scores and hundreds of times he saved the lives of men condemned to death for desertion or some other breach of military law. He was unwilling that any boy should pay the extreme penalty without the fullest possible chance to prove his innocence or to pay the penalty of his crime in some other way.

But it was never safe to appeal to the President without good cause. General Sherman afterwards told of one case that he saw. He was riding with the President through the camp when an officer forced his way to the President's carriage. "Mr. President," he said, "I have a cause of grievance. This morning I went to speak to Colonel Sherman, and he threatened to shoot me." Colonel Sherman sat in the carriage beside the President, but he said nothing, and the President never so much as looked at him. "Threatened to shoot you?" the President asked. "Well, if I were you, and he threatened to shoot me, I would not trust him, for I believe he would do it."

As the troops gathered at Washington and other centres, through the country the cry began to go up for action. The North was anxious to see fighting begin. Sumter had been captured by the Confeder-

ates, and a Confederate flag was flying at Arlington in plain sight from Washington. All through the North ran the cry for Union troops to cross the Potomac and begin the war on Southern soil. The first step was at Arlington, the old home of General Robert E. Lee.

General Lee was a son of "Light Horse" Harry Lee, a brave and able commander of cavalry during the Revolution. He was a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point and had fought in the Mexican War. At the outbreak of the Civil War, he was still in the service of the United States. He had married a granddaughter of Nellie Custis, the step-daughter of George Washington. At the time we are writing about, General Lee had already become the chief in command of the Confederate troops in Virginia. The few Confederates at Arlington were soon scattered, but it was three months before there was another battle, and this time the result was not so comforting to the North. Union troops advanced into Virginia toward a place called Manassas Junction. Here a battle was fought on a hot day in July, 1861. We call it now the Battle of Bull Run. It was only twenty miles from Washington—the roar of the cannon could be heard plainly in the city. By this time, the North was

becoming confident of an easy victory, and General Scott had urged many of the members of Congress to go out and see the battle, telling them that it was probably the only one they would have a chance to witness. When that battle was over, he said, the war would be ended.

All through that day Lincoln waited for news. The first telegrams that came back from the fighting were cheerful. The Union officers were sure that they were winning. It was not until late in the afternoon that word came that the Northern army had been beaten and was in full retreat toward Washington.

The first news of defeat was in a dispatch from a captain of engineers, which was handed to the President in silence. He read:

“General MacDowell’s army in full retreat through Centerville. The day is lost. Save Washington and the remnants of this army . . . the routed troops will not reform.”

The next day they began to come across the long bridge that still connects Washington with the Virginia shore. It was a sad procession. Many had been wounded and hobbled along helped by their comrades. All were desperately tired and tramped stumblingly through the heat and the dust.

There was a panic in Washington then. Again the old cry went up that the Confederates were about to capture the city—that all was lost.

Lincoln wasted no time in fear or in wondering why the battle had been lost. He turned at once to the problem of getting the army together again and throwing more men into its ranks. Most of all he wanted a general.

General Winfield S. Scott, who was the commanding officer of the army when Lincoln was inaugurated, was an old man so feeble that he could not ride a horse and had to be helped in and out of his carriage. He had been an able general in the war with Mexico but he was much too old and weak for the war that was now gathering and he knew it.

In this hour of need, Lincoln turned to Colonel George B. McClellan, a graduate of the United States Military Academy, who also had fought bravely in the war with Mexico. Colonel McClellan had been out of the army for some time and in 1861 was an officer of the Illinois Central Railroad. He was the man who had driven the Confederates out of the mountain counties in the northwestern part of Virginia and saved that region for the Union. That was when West Virginia became a separate state, and it was McClellan who made it possible.

McClellan was probably one of the greatest organizers we have ever had in our army. Within a month, after the Battle of Bull Run, as the disastrous fight of Manassas Junction was called, he had the beaten, weary army rested, refreshed, and ready for another fight.

Great organizer as he was, McClellan was never a great fighter. It is one thing to be ready for war and quite another to go in and win it. Battles cannot be won by a general who sits in his tent and writes letters. That was what McClellan did. Before the war was over, Lincoln tried many generals—Hooker, Burnside, MacDowell, Meade, McClellan again—and none of them with complete success. It was not until he found a man from Illinois named Grant that he had a general who was as sure in his mind as Lincoln was in his what the war was about and how it was to be won. We shall hear more of General Grant presently.

We may be sure that there were plenty of people who thought they knew more than the President did about the way the war should be carried on. And they were not backward in telling him. One of the things that bothered a lot of people was the Negro. What was to be done about slavery? For years now the people of the North had been increasingly bitter

in their opposition to human bondage. Many of them undoubtedly thought that the real underlying purpose of the war was to put an end to the unpaid labor of the black man.

Lincoln knew that his chief task was to crush the rebellion and to bring the seceding states back into the Union. He said so over and over, in every way that he could think of. Usually he said it with good-natured emphasis. He told his callers and correspondents that the war could not be won in a day nor could slavery that had lasted for centuries be wiped out over night.

Now and then he spoke plainly. To one group of callers who had been asking questions and giving advice until his patience must have been worn thin, he said one day:

“Gentlemen, suppose all the property you were worth was in gold and you had put it in the hands of Blondin<sup>1</sup> to carry across the Niagara River on a rope. Would you shake the cable or keep shouting at him, ‘Blondin, stand up a little straighter—Blondin, stoop a little more—go a little faster—lean a little more to the north—lean a little more to the south?’ No, you would hold your breath as well as your tongue, and keep your hands off until he was safe over. The

<sup>1</sup> Blondin was a tight-rope walker of that time who had actually walked a rope across the Niagara River below the Falls.

government is carrying an enormous weight. Untold treasures are in their hands; they are doing the very best they can. Don't badger them. Keep silence, and we will get you safe across."

Hardly had the war begun than the President realized that something must be done about slavery. Many people in the North demanded it. More than that, across the Atlantic the nations of Europe were watching the great struggle closely and studying all its possible meanings. For more than fifty years, the English people had been fighting the slave trade. They had done more than any other nation to keep it down. The English government had freed slaves in their own colonies in the West Indies. Lincoln saw clearly that if he could make it plain to England and France that the war was not merely to put down a rebellion, but also to bring freedom to a large number of human beings now held in slavery, the government of the Union would make friends where now they were almost enemies.

But how and when was it to be done? That was a hard question to answer. The slaves might be bought from their masters by the government and then set free. But the masters were most of them in the states that were fighting the government and they would not sell. There were still the states on the

border, Kentucky and Missouri. These were not in rebellion, but they were still holding their slaves, as they had a right to do under the law as it then stood. He asked representatives of these states to come to Washington and appealed to them to set their Negroes free, the cost to be paid by the Government. They refused.

This gave the President a last choice. He could issue a proclamation declaring slavery at an end in the United States of America. It was a desperate step. He did not know what the result would be. But he was sure by this time that if he did not do something of the sort he himself would be beaten. It was in July, 1862, when the war had been going on a little over a year that he read to his cabinet his Emancipation Proclamation putting an end to slavery in the states that were in rebellion against the Union. He called it a war measure.

Lincoln was not only a great leader; he was also a great politician. He knew that this proclamation would not have much effect while the North was losing battles. And the North was still losing. To be sure, the Confederate armies were still in the Confederate states. But they might cross into the North at any time. The beaten side could not accomplish

much toward freeing the Negro when they were not winning battles. He had not long to wait.

In September of 1862, General Lee led his army across the Potomac into Maryland. General Meade, then in command of the Army of the Potomac, as the Union army in Virginia was called, followed him and defeated him in a bloody battle at Antietam, in Maryland. It was the chance that Lincoln had been looking for. On September 22, Lincoln called his cabinet together and read them the final draft of the Emancipation Proclamation. The date when it was to take effect, the day when the chains were to fall from the Negroes all over America, was January 1, 1863.

When Congress met on the first of December, he presented the Proclamation and urged both houses to support it. There was no joking, no story-telling in his message. He was in deadly earnest, as his words prove.

“Fellow citizens, we cannot escape history. We of this Congress and this Administration will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance or insignificance can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation. We say we are for the Union. The world will

not forget that we say this. We know how to save the Union. The world knows we do know how to save it. We—even we here—hold the power and bear the responsibility. In giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free—honorable alike in what we give and what we preserve. We shall nobly save or meanly lose the last, best hope of earth. Other means may succeed; this could not fail. The way is plain, peaceful, generous, just—a way which, if followed, the world will forever applaud, and God must forever bless."

There was still doubt in the minds of some of the President's supporters, in spite of his promise to do so, whether he would announce the Emancipation as a New Year's present to the country. Dr. Byron Sunderland, the chaplain of the Senate, and Mr. Z. R. Robbins of Washington, went to the White House on the Sunday before New Year's Day and asked the President if he intended to keep his word. He talked with them for a long time and, after they left, Dr. Sunderland wrote down the President's words.

" 'Doctor, if it had been left to you and me, there would have been no war. If it had been left to you and me there would have been no cause for this war; but it was not left to us. God has allowed men to make slaves of their fellows. He permits this war. He has before Him a strange specta-

cle. We, on our side, are praying Him to give us victory, because we believe we are right ; but those on the other side pray Him, too, for victory, believing they are right. What must He think of us? And what is coming from the struggle? What will be the effect of it all on the whites and on the Negroes?"

"And then suddenly a ripple of amusement broke the solemn tone of his voice.

"'As for the Negroes, Doctor, and what is going to become of them? I told Ben Wade the other day that it made me think of a story I read in one of my first books, "*Æsop's Fables*." It was an old edition, and had curious rough woodcuts, one of which showed four white men scrubbing a Negro in a potash kettle filled with cold water. The text explained that the men thought that by scrubbing the Negro they might make him white. Just about the time they thought they were succeeding, he took cold and died. Now, I am afraid by the time we get through this war, the Negro will catch cold and die.'"

You will notice that the President had given his callers a clear idea of his thoughts without telling them exactly what he intended to do. No one was more skillful at that sort of thing than was Abraham Lincoln. He told many stories, but not often merely for the sake of telling a story or of making the others laugh. Most of his yarns contained a moral or



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Lincoln and his cabinet. The executive staff of the United States of America during the Civil War



helped to illuminate the point that he had in mind.

The Emancipation Proclamation was signed on New Year's Day, 1863. Then, as now, this day was marked by a general reception at the White House. It was an open house. Any one might call and shake hands with the President and, from eleven o'clock until the middle of the afternoon, he stood and greeted the long line of callers that passed him. Then he went to his office and found the Proclamation on his desk ready to be signed.

The President dipped his pen in the ink and then looked up. "I never in my life felt more certain that I was doing right than I do in signing this paper. But I have been receiving calls, and shaking hands since nine [eleven?] o'clock, till my arm is stiff and numb. Now this signature is one that will be closely examined, and if they find my hand trembling, they will say, 'He had some compunctions.' But any way it is going to be done."

## CHAPTER XV

### LINCOLN AND THE SOLDIERS

THE time when the slaves were set free was really the darkest hour of the great war. The armies of the North had not yet won a real victory. The South had won many. Men had died by thousands at Fredericksburg, Antietam, Bull Run. The people of the North read the lists of their dead after each great battle and saw that the end of the war seemed farther away than ever.

And the big heart of the President sorrowed with them. It was as though he had a million sons on the battlefield and each death was a personal loss to him. In the midst of the heavy burdens of work that each day brought him, he still found time to talk with soldiers as he met them on the street or saw them in the camps he visited. He wrote letters, many of which are still on file in the War Department at Washington, asking that soldiers condemned to death for desertion or other crime be pardoned or have their sentences softened. He, more than anyone else, knew

that this was a people's war or it was nothing. He knew that his armies were made up of volunteers, most of them without the habit or the understanding of military rule and discipline and that they could not be dealt with like soldiers in the regular army hardened by years of training and following the profession of fighting as other men followed the profession of law or the practice of a business. To these men desertion was not the crime that it would be to a veteran soldier who knew no trade but war.

He knew, too, that their wives and mothers must be considered. To those who waited at home, the welfare of their men in the armies was a matter of greater importance than anything else in the world—to send these men coldly and sternly to a shameful death was to do harm to the Union cause greater than would be worked by hundreds of deaths in battle. He followed the fortunes of these boys of his, day in and day out, almost as though they were really his boys.

One day he was shown a report of five sons of one mother who had been killed in battle. The mother was Mrs. Lydia Bixby of Boston, Massachusetts. We have learned since that the report was a mistake, and that not all of Mrs. Bixby's five sons were in the army, but the letter that Lincoln wrote that mother

deserves to be remembered none the less. Here it is:

“DEAR MADAM:

I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant-General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice on the altar of freedom.

Yours very sincerely and respectfully,

A. LINCOLN.”

But it would be a mistake to suppose that Lincoln was always in favor of softening the punishment for men who had offended against the law. He could be stern just as well as merciful. Times without number, he refused to interfere even when powerful men pleaded with him. In November, 1861, Nathaniel Gordon was convicted of slave-trading. He was condemned to be hanged early in February, 1862. Many prominent men in the North pleaded with

Lincoln to reduce the sentence to imprisonment for life. The President refused because he believed the sentence was just. The most that he would do was to postpone the execution two weeks to give Gordon more time to prepare for death.

The last paragraph of the President's statement on this case reads: "In granting this respite, it becomes my painful duty to admonish the prisoner that, relinquishing all expectation of pardon by human authority, he refer himself alone to the mercy of the common God and Father of all men."

The men who made the strongest appeal to the kind heart of the President were the young soldiers. Many boys under the military age of eighteen enlisted in the Northern armies. Some of them were boys of fifteen and sixteen. They concealed the truth about their ages, ran away from home, gave false names, stretched themselves to make themselves as tall as possible when the recruiting officers measured them, did everything to make the authorities believe they were old enough and big enough to fight. "I am unwilling for any boy under eighteen to be shot," he telegraphed once.

His own sons—he had three at the time he was elected President—were very dear to him, and the thought of them helped him to sympathize more

keenly with the boys who were marching and fighting for the Union he was trying to save. One of his sons, Willie, died during the war, and for days he walked the floor at night sorrowing for the boy who had been taken from him.

At one time, General Tyler of Connecticut accused the President of being too lenient and breaking down discipline in the Union army by his pardons.

"Why do you interfere?" asked General Tyler. "Congress has taken from you all responsibility."

"Yes," said the President curtly, "Congress has taken the responsibility and left the women to howl about me."

One quality that the President never lost in his dealing with the many large and small problems that the war brought him was his sound common sense. All through the North there were many who sympathized with the rebellion and tried to help the cause of the South. This was rank treason and if it could be proved that any of them had actually given help to the people who were fighting the government, they could have been hanged.

The English law still provides that traitors may be "hanged, drawn, and quartered." We have never had so severe a punishment for treason in this coun-

try, and there are few cases of punishment of any kind for this offense in the history of America. There can be little doubt, however, that there were many traitors in the Northern States during the Civil War and many men deserved little mercy at the hands of the Government.

Secret Societies were organized in the North, particularly in Southern Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, whose purpose was to help along the rebellion. These sections were settled largely from the South and had always been friendly to slavery. Some of the societies were called by very highfown names, Knights of the Golden Circle, Sons of Liberty, The Order of the Star, and The Order of American Knights.

In spite of these fancy names, they were organizations of traitors and richly deserved the severest punishment that a traitor can have meted out to him. The men who fought in the armies of the Confederacy were brave soldiers who came out in the open and risked their lives on the field of battle. The men in the North who met in secret and plotted against the Union that was struggling to save its own life deserve nothing but the contempt of every honest man.

There was in Ohio a man named Clement G. Vallandigham who had been especially busy in his at-

tacks on the government. He declared that the war was a wicked mistake and a failure; it was really for the freeing of the Negroes and the enslaving of the whites. He called on the people of the North to cease supporting the President and so end the war. Vallandigham was arrested and sentenced to be confined in a fort in Boston Harbor. Many mistaken men condemned this move and called on the President to release him. Lincoln had no doubt about his plain duty in the matter. He declared:

“Long experience has shown that armies cannot be maintained unless desertion shall be punished by the severe penalty of death. The case requires, and the Constitution sanctions, this punishment. Must I shoot a simple-minded soldier-boy who deserts while I must not touch a hair of a wily agitator who induces him to desert?”

Then Lincoln had an idea that was exactly the sort of thing we would expect him, and no one else, to have conceived. He said to himself that Vallandigham was a friend of the South. Therefore, the right place for him was with his friends. He had Vallandigham taken into the Southern lines under a flag of truce. This means that the men escorting him carried a white flag which prevented the Southern soldiers from firing on them.

Vallandigham objected violently, saying that he was a Union man and not a rebel. The Southerners also declared that they did not want him since he did not believe in slavery and they had all they could do to care for the Northern prisoners that they had taken in battle. When the Northerners heard of it, they chuckled over the thought of the joke that had been played on Vallandigham.

Later on, Vallandigham was allowed to escape and presently came back into the United States by way of Canada. But the men who had laughed at him were no longer willing to listen to his speeches against the Government. Lincoln had got rid of an enemy without making a martyr.

This was a sample of the sort of thing that Lincoln had to contend with all through the earlier part of the war.

Of course, there were constant calls from people who wanted offices, favors, for themselves or their friends, contracts to sell supplies to the troops, everything imaginable. At one time, during the war, one of Lincoln's sons had a light attack of smallpox, and the White House was closed to callers. "At last," said Lincoln, in high glee, "I have something I can give everyone."

In 1863, Congress passed a law declaring what was

called a draft. This meant that every man in the United States between the ages of eighteen and forty-five must enroll in the army unless he could show a good reason, such as a doctor's certificate, why he should not be called on to fight. If you will read the history of the World War against Germany, which the United States entered in 1917, you will see that we had learned a lesson from the time of the Civil War. When we declared war in the spring of 1917, one of the first things we did was to pass a law making every man of fighting age a soldier in the new American army.

There is a different story to tell of 1863. In many places, there was a strong opposition to the draft. Men evaded it in every way possible. In New York City there were riots in the streets. Many Negroes were killed, buildings were burned, and troops had to be called out to scatter the mobs. This was the worst thing that happened, but there were many smaller disturbances in other parts of the country.

## CHAPTER XVI

### LOOKING FOR A MAN

ONE of the hardest tasks that Lincoln had was to find a general for his armies. We have seen that when the war began our army was very small, only about sixteen thousand. This means that there were very few officers. Fifteen years before the Civil War started, we had fought a war with Mexico. That was the only experience our army had had in nearly fifty years, except small skirmishes with the Indian tribes.

Many of the officers who had fought Mexico were now old men. General Winfield S. Scott, one of the most distinguished of these, was the chief commanding officer of the Army in 1861. He was totally unable to take command of an army in the field. General Scott was born in Virginia, and was greatly attached to his native state. Nevertheless, he never wavered in his loyalty to the Union that he had sworn to support.

The same thing cannot be said of other officers who

had taken the same oath. Robert E. Lee was a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, and he, too, had served under the flag in Mexico. But when Virginia went out of the Union, he went with her and was soon placed at the head of the chief army of the Confederacy. It was Lee and his army that threatened Washington and blocked the road to Richmond, the capital of the Confederacy.

Jefferson Davis, who had been made President of the Confederate States of America, was another man who had been an officer in the Mexican War. Afterwards he had been a Senator from Mississippi. There were other officers in the Southern army who had learned the art of war under the Stars and Stripes. Some of them were men of great ability and courage. This fact made Lincoln's hard task even harder.

The most popular general in the North was George B. McClellan. He was a man of great personal attractiveness and undoubtedly was a soldier of high ability. But there was a fatal weakness in his character. He was afraid. This does not mean that he was a personal coward. No one could accuse him of that. But his cowardice was of a sort that is more harmful in the general of an army. He was afraid of being defeated. No one was better at organizing

and drilling and getting an army ready to fight, and no one could be less willing to fight when the army was ready.

All through the first years of the war, McClellan besieged the President and the War Department for more and more men and supplies. The President was patient and long suffering. The men and the supplies were sent. Still there was no fighting or none that was of any importance. Apparently, McClellan expected General Lee to surrender to him without a fight. There are many letters on file that the President wrote him during these doubtful days urging him to attack. McClellan was replying that he was not ready or he argued that the enemy was much stronger than he. We know now that most of the time he had almost twice as many men under him as Lee could muster and that with a little effort he could have known this too.

Finally, even Lincoln's patience was worn out and McClellan was removed. Then began a long series of experiments with other generals. We are speaking now only of the Army of the Potomac, as the Union Army in Virginia was called. Hooker, Pope, Burnside, and McDowell were tried. They seemed able to do nothing but lose battles against armies that were smaller than their own.

Then Lincoln put McClellan back. This time a victory was won, that at Antietam in Maryland which gave Lincoln his chance to issue the Emancipation Proclamation freeing the slaves. But McClellan, having defeated Lee, allowed him to get back across the Potomac into Virginia, and Lincoln dropped him for the last time.

General Burnside was put in his place and was soon after defeated at the battle of Fredericksburg, a bloody fight in which over ten thousand Northern troops were killed or wounded. The country was sick and angry and demanded another change. The President tried again and gave the command to General Hooker, a brave, honest officer, but without great ability. He rested the army and drilled and trained it until it was in splendid shape. There were a hundred thousand men in this one force, a splendid army trained to the minute.

Early in April, 1863, Lincoln went down to Falmouth, Virginia, to see this magnificent array of his boys in camp. They marched in review before him. As they passed his tired eyes, he saw not only the men who marched before him, but the figures, too, of their mothers and wives at home. He saw also the countless dead that had been sacrificed on a hundred battlefields of the war that was not yet near its end.

A young soldier who marched in that army, Seymour Dodd, has written the story of what he saw that day:

“As we neared the reviewing-stand, the tall figure of Lincoln loomed up. He was on horseback, and his severely plain, black citizen’s dress set him in bold relief against the crowd of generals grouped behind him. Distinguished men were among them; but we had no eyes save for our revered President, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, the brother of every soldier, the great leader of a nation in its hour of trial. There was no time save for a marching salute; the occasion called for no cheers. Self-examination, not glorification, had brought the army and its chief together. But we passed close to him, so that he could look into our faces, and we into his.

“None of us, to our dying day, can forget that countenance! From its presence, we marched directly onward toward our camp, and as soon as ‘route step’ was ordered and the men were free to talk, they spoke thus to each other: ‘Did you ever see such a look on any man’s face?’ ‘He is bearing the burdens of the nation. It is an awful load; it is killing him.’ ‘Yes, that is so; he is not long for this world.’

“Concentrated in that one great, strong, yet tender face, the agony of the life or death struggle of the hour was revealed as we had never seen it before. With new understanding, we knew why we were soldiers.”

Only a month later this army marched into an-

other fearful slaughter at Chancellorsville, and another wave of mourning swept over the whole country. As the news of the battle that had been lost and the men who had been left dead on the field came into the War Department, the President sat beside the operator and read the telegrams as they came over the wire. When the full news of the disaster was plain to him, he paced up and down the room saying over and over, "My God, my God, what will the country say?"

Again a shout went up from all parts of the North for a change of generals. Somewhere there must be a man who could lead the Union Armies to victory and end this butchery of the young and brave of both sides. A few months before, Edmund Clarence Stedman, then a young Northern poet, had written a poem which expressed this long wail from breaking Northern hearts. Here are the last two stanzas:

"Is there never one in all the land,  
One on whose might the Cause may lean?  
Are all the common ones so grand,  
And all the titled ones so mean?  
What if your failure may have been  
In trying to make good bread from bran,  
From worthless metal a weapon keen?  
Abraham Lincoln, find us a man!"

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"O, we will follow him to the death,  
Where the foeman's fiercest columns are!  
O, we will use our latest breath,  
Cheering for every sacred star!  
His to marshal us high and far;  
Ours to battle, as patriots can  
When a Hero leads to the Holy war!—  
Abraham Lincoln, Give us a Man!"

The man was coming, but he was not yet quite at hand. Before the Conqueror should appear there was still another great battle to be fought and thousands more of brave men to die before Secession could be ended.

It was in the summer of 1863 that General Lee decided that he would carry the war into the North. Up to this time, you must remember, all the fighting had been on Southern soil and some of the fiercest of it in Virginia. There had been fighting in the West, too, along the Mississippi, and the East was beginning to hear of a man out there named Ulysses Simpson Grant.

But it was in the East that the hardest problems lay, and when Lee started his march north there was panic all through Pennsylvania and New York. What if he should break through and reach the great Northern cities that lay helpless before him? Would

they be able to turn him back before he had broken the back of the Union cause and compelled the government of the Union to make peace on Southern terms? The defeat at Chancellorsville had broken Lincoln's faith in General Hooker and, while the Army of the Potomac was hurrying across Maryland to overtake Lee and turn his army back, he removed him and put General Meade in his place.

The armies met at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and here the greatest battle of the whole war was fought. It lasted for three days and was ended on the Fourth of July, 1863.

Both armies were brave and hardened with much fighting and both were desperate in their aims. The South was making its last, greatest effort to break through and beat the Union forces to their knees. All the other battles that had gone before were only preparations for this. The Union soldiers were determined to hold back the Confederates. If the Stars and Stripes went down this time it might be cruelly hard to lift it in triumph again.

The last day of fighting saw the high tide of the battle—Pickett's charge. The Union troops lay along the crest of a low ridge called Cemetery Ridge. Lee believed that if he could break through here he would win the battle. This last scene of the great

tragedy was opened with cannon. For more than an hour a hundred and forty Southern guns bombarded the Union troops. The roar of their firing was continuous and the air was filled with noise. The Union cannon answered and the riflemen of both sides lay behind the big guns and waited. At that time, no soldier on earth had ever heard such a tumult of flying death.

Then the firing ceased and there was dead silence for a moment. But only for a moment. Out from behind the Confederate batteries, where he had been waiting, swept Pickett and his men. There were nearly five thousand of them, the finest men in all the Southern armies, picked, seasoned, drilled, ready for this moment. It was nearly a mile to where the Union soldiers stood. The Confederates had to make their way across an open field, in plain sight of the Northern troops who waited along the top of the ridge.

To the men who watched on both sides it did not seem possible that a single man could live through the storm of shot and shell that broke on them from the Union lines. They were cut down by tens and hundreds, but they closed up the gaps in their ranks and kept on. They moved without haste or panic, first at a walk, then, as they drew nearer their goal, they quickened their pace to a trot.

The way they had come was strewn with the bodies of dead and wounded, but the living would not be stopped.

Union rifles blazed at them from behind the low stone wall on the crest, but they charged straight up to the flaming guns. The thing they were trying to do was impossible. Flesh and blood could not live through the storm that swept them. Yet some men reached the top and passed the cannon. They bayoneted the Union cannoneers where they stood and fought so close that they were burned with the powder that belched from the muzzles of muskets.

But they were only a few now and they could not hold the ground they had won. As they began to fall back, the firing slackened and died. The Confederacy had made its last bold bid for victory, and it was not enough.

Many people have criticized General Lee for ordering this charge, but there can be no disputing the courage of the men who made it. They were Americans of the purest stock and, whatever we may think of the wisdom of their officers, we can do nothing but admire the bravery of the men in their gallant effort to set the Stars and Bars amid the Union cannon.

This was the high tide of the Confederacy. From

that time their cause was to decline. But there were many battles to be fought before the last day came and the weary armies could go home again. After the failure at Gettysburg, Lee slipped away south with his beaten, tired army, and got safely back into Virginia. The Union troops were weary, too, and Meade failed to follow the retreating Confederates. He did not know how great a victory he had won.

We must remember Gettysburg not only for the great battle that was fought there, but also for a great speech that was made soon after on the field where thousands of Americans had died in battle. Soon after the defeat of Lee, it was decided to turn the battlefield of Gettysburg into a great soldier cemetery. In November, 1863, the ground was dedicated, and the President was invited to speak. His speech was short, but it is one that every American should know. It is one of the greatest speeches of all time.

Probably no more powerful words were ever spoken on American soil and few times in the history of the world has any man so touched the hearts and minds of a whole nation. Part of it was apparently written the night before at the White House and the rest just before he went to the field for the ceremony of dedication. Abraham Lincoln knew the hearts of his coun-

trymen so well that he needed little time to put into words what was in his own heart on this great occasion.

This was the speech that has thrilled countless thousands:

“Fourscore and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth, on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great Civil War; testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here

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highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

The President did not know it, but what he said at Gettysburg was almost a prophecy. The men, living and dead, who had fought there four months before he spoke, had saved government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

While the Battle of Gettysburg was being fought, another victory was being won in the West that was almost as important. The Confederates controlled the Mississippi River, and the Union troops had been slowly cutting their way through. Finally the only barrier that remained was the city of Vicksburg in the northern part of the state of Mississippi. This was attacked by an army under the command of General Grant.

Grant was a graduate of West Point and had fought in the Mexican War. At the time the Civil War broke out he was running a tannery in Galena, Illinois. He went back into the service and was in command of the attacks on Fort Henry and Fort Donelson in Tennessee. The Southern commander at Donelson had tried to get better terms of surrender. Grant replied that nothing would be accepted

but "unconditional surrender." His initials were U. S. (Ulysses Simpson), but after Donelson his men called him Unconditional Surrender Grant.

Lincoln had heard much about him, but he had never seen him. The thing that impressed him most was the fact that Grant spent little time writing letters or demanding more men and ammunition. He took what the government could give him and went ahead. Lincoln said of him: "General Grant is a very meager letter-writer and telegrapher, but a very copious fighter." At another time he said: "I don't know General Grant's plans, and I do not care to know them; I know he has plans and is at work carrying them out."

General Grant had many enemies who ran to the President to tell tales about him and urge the appointment of other officers in his place. "I can't spare this man," Lincoln said; "he fights." Others said that Grant drank. Lincoln's answer was quick. "Tell me the kind of whiskey he drinks," he declared, "and I will send a barrel of it to some of my other generals."

By this time Lincoln had made up his mind. Grant did not write long letters; he did not make excuses; he did not ask for things that were impossible for the government to give him; and he would

fight. Early in 1864, Grant was made commander of all the armies of the Union with the grade of Lieutenant-General, a title that had not been used since the time of Washington. The highest rank that the other generals had held was that of major-general.

Grant went at once to Washington and met the President for the first time. At least the President thought it was the first time, but General Grant told him that he had heard him speak against Douglas at Freeport, Illinois, in 1858, and had shaken hands with him in the crowd afterwards. The talk between these two great men was very short. Grant asked the President what he expected him to do. "Take Richmond," was the President's answer. "Give me the men," said Grant. Then he set to work making the Army of the Potomac over again and getting ready for the last fighting of the war.

## CHAPTER XVII

### LINCOLN IS ELECTED AGAIN

**I**T would be natural to think that all the people of the North would have agreed to leave Lincoln in office until the war was over. That was far from being the case. As the President is elected for a term of four years, Lincoln's first term was to come to an end in March, 1865. The election was held in the fall of 1864. There was considerable doubt at first whether Lincoln would even be nominated. Mr. Chase, who was a member of his Cabinet, an ambitious, selfish man of considerable ability, had hoped to be nominated in 1860 when the honor fell to Lincoln. As the time drew near for the nominations in 1864, Chase again began to look about and make his plans to be nominated, in spite of the fact that he was in the President's Cabinet as Secretary of the Treasury and owed him the fullest possible support. There was some talk of Grant and a good many people believed that John C. Frémont should have the nomination.

Lincoln did nothing to advance his own cause. He

did not even remove Chase from the Cabinet as he might properly have done. His position then, as it had been all through his term of office, was that if there was a man in sight that the people thought would make a better President, they should have a free hand to elect him.

When the nominating convention was held, there was no doubt as to whom the country wanted. The faith of the people held as true as that of the soldiers in the camps. Lincoln was the man they wanted, and he was nominated almost without opposition. The Democratic party nominated General McClellan who had many friends, in spite of his failure as a commander of the Army of the Potomac.

When the election was held in November, there was no doubt about the confidence of the people in Lincoln. He was re-elected by a majority of almost half a million votes. Citizens do not vote directly for the President, but for a group of men called electors. These in turn vote for the President. In 1864, there were 233 electors. Two hundred and twelve of these were for Lincoln. The country did not want Chase or Frémont or McClellan,—it wanted Lincoln. The President was satisfied but said nothing, except that the people apparently did not care to “swap horses while crossing a stream.”

Often Lincoln cloaked his natural feelings of strain and worry in a homely story. While Chase was a member of his Cabinet, and at the same time plotting to have himself made President, many of Lincoln's friends urged that he should force Chase out of the Cabinet. Lincoln refused and finally told this story as related by William E. Barton in *The Life of Abraham Lincoln*.

"My brother and I were once plowing corn, I driving the horse and he holding the plow. The horse was lazy, but on one occasion he rushed across the field so that I, with my long legs, could scarcely keep pace with him. On reaching the end of the furrow, I found an enormous chin-fly flying up and striking him under the chin and I knocked it off. My brother asked what I did that for. I told him I didn't want the old horse bitten in that way. 'Why,' said my brother, 'that's all that made him go.' Now, if Mr. Chase has a Presidential chin-fly biting him, I'm not going to knock him off, if it will only make his department go."

When Lincoln was inaugurated for the second time in March, 1865, he made another great speech. By this time, the people of the North knew that the end of the war was near. General Grant was not afraid to fight and, as soon as his army was ready, he had started his advance on the Confederate Capital at

Richmond, Virginia. But there were brave men and good generals opposing him and he had fought his way through terrible battles. In the Battles of the Wilderness and Cold Harbor, the loss of life had been greater than in any other fighting of the Civil War,—the whole North had been shocked by the slaughter.

But by this time they knew that it was the only way to end the war. Battles could not be fought without good men being killed. They realized, too, that the South was losing heavily and was weaker every day. Grant was not cold-blooded, as some men thought. He mourned for his dead as sincerely as did anyone else, but he held to his plan.

In his own words, he had determined “to fight it out on that line if it took all summer.” It did more than that; it began in 1864, took all summer—and then the fall and winter and into the beginning of the next spring, but he was bound to win in the end, if only the North stood firm and gave him the men he needed. By this time, the South was almost at the end of its man-power. Old men and boys were in the ranks, and there were very few left to call on to take the place of the dead and wounded.

It was near the end of the rebellion when Lincoln stood before a great throng in front of the Capitol at

Washington and made his second inaugural address. He saw as clearly as ever the purpose of the war, but he saw, too, that the end was surely coming and the work that must be done when the war should be over. Both these things were in his mind when he said:

“With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation’s wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphans, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.”

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE END OF THE WAR

THE end of the war was near at hand when Lincoln began his second term in the Spring of 1865. The Confederacy had failed along the Mississippi, and that river was in Union hands all the way to the Gulf of Mexico. New Orleans had been captured and also Mobile and Savannah, two of the chief seaport towns in the South. General Sherman had captured and burned Atlanta, Georgia, which was the great arsenal and storehouse of the Confederacy. Then he swept east and north, leaving a trail of destruction behind him sixty miles wide. There are still old men and women in the South who curse the name of Sherman for the ruin that he carried with him through that part of their land, but it was necessary to break the back of the Confederate government. The song "Marching Through Georgia" was written about this march of Sherman's.

Savannah was a Christmas gift to the Union in 1864. When word came of this success, the Presi-

dent wrote to General Sherman. Here is part of his letter:

“Many, many thanks for your Christmas gift, the capture of Savannah. When you were about leaving Atlanta for the Atlantic coast, I was anxious, if not fearful; but feeling that you were the better judge, and remembering that ‘nothing risked nothing gained,’ I did not interfere. Now, the undertaking being a success, the honor is all yours; for I believe none of us went further than to acquiesce.”

This was characteristic of Lincoln. When he found men he could trust he let them alone. Then when success crowned their work, he gave them all the credit, claiming for himself only such credit as belonged to him, for “leaving them alone.”

But it was with Grant in Virginia that his interest was greatest. In the World War that ended in 1918, we heard a great deal about trench warfare and the slow process of wearing down the enemy by constant pressure. This was nothing new. If you will read the long story of Grant’s fighting around Richmond in 1864 and 1865, you will find the same things going on that went on in France and Flanders in 1915 and 1916, and in fact, all through the World War.

Richmond was the capital of the Southern Confederacy. It was their largest and one of their old-

est and proudest cities. They felt that to lose that was to lose everything. Also it had been the goal of Northern ambitions from the beginning of the war in 1861. Until Grant appeared every attack had been turned back. McClellan, Hooker, Burnside had lost thousands of brave men and at the end found themselves no nearer Richmond than they had been at the beginning.

Grant knew that the only way to win through the Southern defenses was to keep hammering. He lost twenty thousand men in the Wilderness, ten thousand at Cold Harbor, thousands more at Spottsylvania Courthouse and in the siege of Petersburg, but each battle found his grip tightened a little more on Richmond.

After he was inaugurated a second time, Lincoln decided that he would see something of the fighting around Richmond. Grant's headquarters were at City Point, a small town on the James River, not far from Richmond. Late in March the President went down the Potomac on a small steamer and up the James to City Point. It was a place of intense activity. Fighting was going on almost every day and from where he stood the President could see a wide stretch of country, every foot of which had been fought over. The river was filled with boats bring-

ing supplies and taking away wounded and prisoners. Here he could see and talk with some of his beloved soldiers.

The war had been a fearful nightmare to him and he could hardly believe that it was near its end. Both Grant and Sherman were of the opinion that they would soon win a complete triumph, but that before that could happen, they would have to fight at least one more great battle. Lincoln hoped that this might not be necessary. "No more bloodshed," was his constant prayer. The day after he arrived there was another terrific battle. The Confederates, weary and discouraged as they were, half fed and with little ammunition, hurled themselves against one of the Union forts, Fort Stedman. They were driven back with heavy loss.

Then on the last day of March, Grant began his final forward movement. Lincoln sat at headquarters, listening to the reports that came in over the field telegraph lines that were strung behind the advancing army. This time it was a story of uninterrupted victory that the telegraph sounders told. On April 3, he wired back to the Secretary of War in Washington that the Southerners were abandoning Petersburg and Richmond. This meant that the war was over. Lincoln went with Grant through the

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streets of Petersburg, which is practically a suburb of Richmond, and saw the ruin that the war had brought. Houses were destroyed by the fire of cannon, wreckage was piled on the streets, and everywhere were signs of the ruin that follows in the wake of war.

The next day he went on up the river and set foot in Richmond. It must have been one of the most solemn and most triumphant moments in his life. Here was the city that he had been trying for four years to capture, the capital and center of the rebellion that had striven to break apart the Union that he had worked to save. Now it was open to his entry and with only four companions and a guard of ten marines he walked the streets. There was no order and, for all that he knew, his life was in danger every instant that he was in the city. A great part of it had been burned and fire was still raging in several places.

Word passed around that Lincoln, the Emancipator, was there. Soon Negroes blocked his way, weeping, blessing him, even throwing themselves in front of him to kiss his feet.

There was no bitterness in the President's triumph. The great rebellion was over. A few days more and there would be no armies in the field against the Union. The next thing was to heal the wounds that

war had made. To Admiral Porter he said: "Get them to plowing once more and gathering in their own little crops, eating popcorn at their own firesides, and you can't get them to shoulder a musket again for half a century."

Again he said: "They will never shoulder a musket again in anger, and if Grant is wise, he will leave them their guns to shoot crows with and their horses to plow with. It would do no harm." And that was what General Grant did in the agreement that he made with Lee at Appomattox.

That Lincoln's judgment was sound was proved in 1898. In the war with Spain, the sons of the men who fought to end the Union fought under the Stars and Stripes in Cuba and the Philippines. There were even a few men wearing khaki in that war who had marched in the armies of the Confederacy.

The country will never see greater rejoicing than that which followed the news of the capture of Richmond and Lee's surrender. For four years the North had looked and hoped and prayed for that day, scarcely daring to believe that they would ever see it. They had poured sons into the armies until there was hardly a home in the whole country, North and South, that did not wear a badge of mourning. They

had been promised victory again and again, only to be shocked with news of disaster.

Now the promised day had dawned. Bells rang, whistles were blown, no one worked if he could possibly make holiday. Celebrations were held in every town that could muster enough people to parade or listen to speeches or rejoicing. James Russell Lowell, poet, patriot, and sincere admirer of Lincoln, wrote to a friend. "The news, my dear Charles, is from Heaven. I felt a strange and tender exultation. I wanted to laugh and I wanted to cry, and ended by holding my peace and feeling devoutly thankful."

And the gladdest of all the glad souls in the North that day was Abraham Lincoln. He had borne the heaviest burdens and paid the highest cost. He, too, had often despaired of living to see the day of victory. Now it had dawned for him too. The Union was saved.

In Charleston Harbor, a little group of Northerners raised the Stars and Stripes once more over the pile of shattered rubbish that had been Fort Sumter. This was where the war had begun and now they offered proof that it was ended.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE FOURTEENTH OF APRIL

ONE of the happiest and saddest days in the long calendar of American history is the fourteenth of April, 1865. It opened happily for the President. As the war dragged its slow course along, he had grown sadder with each passing day. Men who knew him and saw him constantly have told us how his thin face had become more haggard and his shoulders stooped as though with an actual burden. His rugged face was marked with deep lines and his sunken eyes seemed almost ready to disappear in his face, so sad and far away they were. Once he said, "I think I shall never be glad again."

On February 12, 1865, he had passed his fifty-sixth birthday, but he felt himself to be already an old man and often spoke of himself as such. He seemed to think often of the end of his life and once when passing a country churchyard, with Mrs. Lincoln, he pointed at it and said to her: "Mary, you are younger than I. You will survive me. When I am

gone, lay my remains in some quiet place like that."

At another time, he was on his way up the Potomac with Charles Sumner, a Senator from Massachusetts and one of the great leaders of the fight against slavery, when he turned suddenly to Mr. Sumner and quoted some lines from the play of Macbeth by Shakespeare:

"Duncan is in his grave;  
After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well;  
Treason has done his worst; nor steel, nor poison,  
Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing,  
Can touch him further."

There were still important things to happen when the President began his work on that fourteenth of April. General Sherman was somewhere in the South with his army making his way North. Lee had surrendered, but there still were Confederates in arms. The hard task of healing the wounds of war remained to be done. Some sort of government must be set up in the states that had so lately been in rebellion. The Negroes had been freed, but no one knew what was to be done with them. They no longer were cattle, but they were not yet quite citizens.

How were the people of the South going to feel and behave? The war was over, but a great deal of

the bitterness remained. When wars end, something more must be done than merely march the armies home and begin again where they had left off to become soldiers. As the world has learned again since 1918, it takes years to clear away the wreckage that the fighting has caused.

But these problems did not weigh so heavily on the President's mind as had the thought of the slaughter that had gone on for four years. At the Cabinet meeting that was held that day, Lincoln told of a dream that he had had the night before. It was a dream that had come to him many times. He seemed, he said, to be on some kind of a ship that was moving toward a dark and unknown shore. He had had that dream before every great battle of the war, Bull Run, Antietam, Gettysburg, Stone River, Vicksburg.

Always some great event had followed the dream. It was not always victory. Sometimes it had been crushing defeat. But there had always been some happening of great importance after this dream had visited him. Now he believed that he was about to hear good news from General Sherman.

That evening, arrangements had been made for a family party at the theatre. For the first time in many months, the Lincolns felt that they could enjoy themselves without reserve or apology. The play

was *Our American Cousin*. If you have the opportunity ever to see *Lord Dundreary* on the stage, you can tell yourself that that is really the play that Lincoln saw the night of the fourteenth of April. It is greatly changed as it is played to-day, but it was out of *Our American Cousin* that *Lord Dundreary* eventually grew.

In the afternoon the President went for a long drive with Mrs. Lincoln and talked with her of plans for the future after his second term should be ended. Years later Mrs. Lincoln told an old Springfield friend, Isaac Arnold, what he said to her then:

“Mary, we have had a hard time of it since we came to Washington; but the war is over, and with God’s blessing we can hope for four years of peace and happiness, and then quiet. We have laid by some money and, during this term, we will try and save up more, but we shall not have enough to support us. We will go back to Illinois, and I will open a law office at Springfield or Chicago and practice law, and at least do enough to help give us a livelihood.”

It was about nine o’clock when the President and his party reached the theatre, Ford’s theatre, long since torn down. They went at once to the Presidential box, and the play went on after the applause for the President had died down.

In the third act of the play a stranger was seen to make his way along the back of the theatre and around to the entrance of the President's box. The few people who saw him apparently assumed that it was some one who had a right to go where this man was heading. A minute later, there was a report of a pistol from that direction. For an instant the audience thought that it had something to do with the play that they were watching on the stage.

Then a tall figure of a man appeared at the front of the President's box and stood for an instant.

One of the men in the box behind him, Major Rathbone, grasped him, but the stranger pulled away and leaped to the stage. The American flag draped at the side of the box caught one of the spurs that he wore on his high riding boots and he fell heavily. Rising at once, he limped to the centre of the stage and, brandishing a dagger in his right hand, shouted "Sic Semper Tyrannis." This is the Latin motto of the state of Virginia and means, literally, "Thus always to tyrants." As he turned and dashed from the stage, several people in the audience recognized him as John Wilkes Booth, a brilliant and eccentric actor and the brother of Edwin Booth, one of the greatest actors that America has ever produced.

This, then, was the event that the President's dream

foretold. Not victory, not defeat even, but the greatest tragedy that the war had known. The President sat still in his chair, his head drooped forward. The bullet from the pistol held by Booth had struck him in the head.

As soon as it was recognized that Lincoln had been shot, he was carried out of the theatre and taken to a lodging house across the street. It was a dingy little room in a dingy house where the President of the United States was laid.

Swiftly the news spread through the city and there was wild excitement. Soon it was known that Secretary Seward, the Secretary of State, who was ill at home, had been attacked at about the same time by a man who forced his way into the house and seriously wounded Mr. Seward and his son. Messengers were sent for other members of the Cabinet who gathered at the President's bedside. Troops were called out to patrol the streets and prevent any rioting or disorder. No one knew what to expect and everyone feared the worst through the dark hours of that terrible night.

It was twenty minutes after seven o'clock on the morning of April 15, that Abraham Lincoln died. When it was known that the great heart was still, Stanton, the grim, indomitable Secretary of War, the man who had ridiculed Lincoln a few years before at

Cincinnati, rose from his place at the bedside and spoke six words of prophecy: "Now he belongs to the ages."

As soon as it was sure that the assassin was John Wilkes Booth, the pursuit was begun. His leg had been broken in the fall when the flag caught in his spur and the trail was picked up first at the house of Dr. Samuel T. Mudd, who set the broken leg. Booth was finally cornered in a barn in Virginia and was shot while trying to escape after the barn had been set on fire. It was curious to note that after Lincoln's assassination, the fact came out that in August, 1864, the following inscription was found scratched on the window of a hotel room in Meadville, Pennsylvania:

"Abe Lincoln departed this life, August 13, 1864, by the effects of poison." The man who occupied this room the night before was John Wilkes Booth. Evidently he was planning the murder of Lincoln nearly one year before he did the deed.

The assassination threw Washington and the whole North into mingled mourning and alarm. There was a general feeling that the crime had been the result of a conspiracy. How widespread was it? And how many more officials of the government were marked for murder? Arrests began. All the people

taken in charge were tried before a special court composed of nine officers. Lewis Payne, D. C. Herold, George B. Atzerot, and Mrs. Mary E. Surratt were hanged. Four others, Edward Spangler, Dr. Samuel T. Mudd, Michael O'Laughlin, and Samuel Arnold, were imprisoned. All these, except O'Laughlin who died in prison, were later pardoned.

The day after Abraham Lincoln died was Easter Sunday. It is probable that there were few churches in the North in which the death of the great President was not the principal subject of the sermon. In the remote towns and villages, little was known of the circumstances of his death, but a great deal was known about his life.

In Brooklyn, New York, there was a famous preacher in Plymouth Church, Henry Ward Beecher. He had been an untiring foe of slavery and secession and a firm friend of Abraham Lincoln. At one time, he had sold a slave from the pulpit of his church in order to show the people of his congregation what the slave trade was like. Only a week before, he had been at Charleston to see the flag of the Union raised again over the ruins of Fort Sumter.

The tribute that he paid to Lincoln in his pulpit on the Easter morning after the President's death was one of the many tributes that were paid that morning

in churches everywhere, and it was one of the greatest. Here are the last two paragraphs of that sermon:

“And now the martyr is moving in triumphal march, mightier than when alive. The nation rises up at every stage of his coming. Cities and towns are his pall-bearers, and the cannon beats the hours with solemn progression. Dead, Dead, DEAD, he yet speaketh! Is Washington dead? Is Hampden dead? Is David dead? Is any man that was ever fit to live, dead? Disenthralled of flesh, and risen in the unobstructed sphere where passion never comes, he begins his illimitable work. His life is now grafted upon the infinite, and will be fruitful as no earthly life can be. Pass on, thou that hast overcome! Your sorrows, oh, people, are his peace! Your bells, and bands, and muffled drums, sound triumph in his ear. Wail and weep here; God makes it echo joy and triumph there. Pass on!

“Four years ago, oh, Illinois, we took from your midst an untried man, and from among your people. We return him to you a mighty conqueror. Not thine, any more, but the nation’s. Not ours, but the world’s. Give him place, oh, ye prairies! In the midst of this great continent, his dust shall rest, a sacred treasure to myriads who shall pilgrim to that shrine to kindle anew their zeal and patriotism. Ye winds that move over the mighty places in the West, chant his requien! Ye people, behold a martyr whose blood, as so many articulate words, pleads for fidelity, for law, for liberty!”

It was a long, slow funeral procession that bore the President's body back from Washington to his home in Springfield. It had lain in state at Washington, in the rotunda of the Capitol, and thousands had passed to look their last at the kindly face. In the long line that wound by the coffin were people of every age and rank. Thousands of Negroes who owed their freedom to him were in the throng. To them he was "Mass' Linkum," their best friend, their kind father.

When the train finally left Washington, on April 21, a week from the day he was shot, it stopped first at Baltimore, the city that had refused to let the Union troops march through its streets in 1861. Here it lay in state for hours while more thousands filed by. This scene was repeated in Harrisburg, Philadelphia, New York City, Albany, Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo, Cleveland, Columbus, Indianapolis, and Chicago.

At stations along the way where the train was not scheduled to stop and beside the track in the country, people stood for hours and, when the train passed, they bared their heads in respect to all that was left of the President they had served and honored. The train reached Springfield May 2, twelve days after leaving Washington. The guard of honor that ac-

accompanied it on its slow westward way was made up of one member of Congress from each state of the Union and all the Congressmen from Illinois.

It was Spring and in countless dooryards bloomed bushes of lilac. The thought of these moved Walt Whitman, one of the greatest of American poets, to write a hymn that told, for all time, the story of the mourning that swept the land as word went forth that the body of the President was on its way home. We quote the following verses:

When lilacs last in the door-yard bloomed,  
And the great star early droop'd in the western sky in the  
night,  
I mourn'd—and yet shall mourn with ever-returning  
spring.  
O ever-returning spring! trinity sure to me you bring;  
Lilac blooming perennial, and drooping star in the west,  
And thought of him I love. . . .

. . . . .

Coffin that passes through lanes and streets,  
Through day and night, with the great cloud darkening the  
land,  
With the pomp of the inloop'd flags, with the cities draped  
in black,

With the show of the States themselves, as of crepe-veil'd women, standing,  
With processions long and winding, and the flambeaus of the night,  
With the countless torches lit—with the silent sea of faces and the unbared heads,  
With the waiting depot, the arriving coffin, and the sombre faces,  
With dirges through the night, with the thousand voices rising strong and solemn;  
With all the mournful voices of the dirges, pour'd around the coffin,  
The dim-lit churches and the shuddering organ—where amid these you journey,  
With the tolling, tolling bells' perpetual clang;  
Here! Coffin that slowly passes,  
I give you my sprig of lilac."

Lincoln's death stilled the criticism and ridicule that had been heaped upon him all through his life. Even toward the end of the war, when men saw him in something like his true greatness, there were many who still failed to recognize the high, unselfish patriotism of the man and his single-minded courage in following the course that he knew to be the right one.

In England, there had been a great deal of criticism of Lincoln. The leading men of that country sympathized with the South; there were many times when they seemed at the point of recognizing the government of the Confederacy as an independent nation. This would have meant great hardship, if not ruin, for the Union.

It was hard for the educated, cultured Englishman to understand a man like Lincoln, born in poverty, self-educated, fighting his way up through countless hardships to the highest place in the gift of the people. It was small wonder that they called him a boor, an ape, a jesting, grinning clown from the backwoods. Englishmen and some Americans, too, had called him harder names than these, and had lived to repent their harsh words.

One of the severest critics of Lincoln had been a famous weekly paper, *Punch*. The editors and contributors of *Punch* were among the most distinguished writers of Great Britain—and are to-day. When the word of Lincoln's death reached England, a member of the staff of *Punch*, afterwards its editor, Tom Taylor, wrote a poem that still stands as probably the finest public apology and retraction that has ever been made. It is worth printing here:

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Fouly Assassinated April 14, 1865

You lay a wreath on murdered Lincoln's bier,  
You, who with mocking pencil wont to trace  
Broad for the self-complacent British sneer  
His length of shambling limb, his furrowed face.

His gaunt, gnarled hands, his unkempt, bristling hair,  
His garb uncouth, his bearing ill at ease;  
His lack of all we prize as debonair,  
Of power or will to shine, of art to please.

You, whose smart pen backed up the pencil's laugh,  
Judging each step, as though the way were plain;  
Reckless, so it could point its paragraph  
Of chief's perplexity or people's pain. . . .

Beside this corpse, that bears for winding sheet  
The Stars and Stripes he lived to rear anew,  
Between the mourners at his head and feet,  
Say, scurril-jester, is there room for you?

Yes, he had lived to shame me from my sneer,  
To lame my pencil, and confute my pen—  
To make me own this hind of princes peer,  
This rail-splitter true-born king of men.

My shallow judgment I had learnt to rue,  
Noting how to occasion's height he rose,  
How his quaint wit made home-truth seem more true,  
How, iron-like, his temper grew by blows.

How humble yet how hopeful he could be;  
How in good fortune and in ill the same;  
Nor bitter in success, nor boastful he,  
Thirsty for gold, nor feverish for fame.

He went about his work—such work as few  
Ever had laid on head and heart and hand—  
As one who knows where there's a task to do  
Man's honest will must heaven's good grace command:  
  
Who trusts the strength will with the burden grow,  
That God makes instruments to work his will,  
If but that will we can arrive to know,  
Nor tamper with the weights of good and ill.

So he went forth to battle on the side  
That he felt clear was liberty's and right's,  
As in his peasant boyhood he had plied  
His warfare with rude nature's thwarting mights—

The uncleared forest, the unbroken soil,  
The iron bark, that turns the lumberer's axe;  
The rapid, that o'erbears the boatman's toil,  
The prairie, hiding the mazed wanderer's tracks,

The ambushed Indian, and the prowling bear—

Such were the needs that helped his youth to train:  
Rough culture—but such trees large fruit may bear  
If but their stocks be of right girth and grain.

So he grew up, a destined work to do,  
And lived to do it; four long-suffering years'  
Ill-fate, ill-feeling, ill-report lived through,  
And then he heard the hisses change to cheers.

The taunts to tribute, the abuse to praise,  
And took both with the same unwavering mood:  
Till, as he came on light from darkling days  
And seemed to touch the goal from where he stood,

A felon hand, between the goal and him,  
Reached from behind his back, a trigger prest—  
And those perplexed and patient eyes were dim,  
Those gaunt, long-laboring limbs were laid to rest.

The words of mercy were upon his lips,  
Forgiveness in his heart and on his pen,  
When vile murder brought swift eclipse  
To thoughts of peace on earth, good will to men.

The Old World and the New, from sea to sea,  
Utter one voice of sympathy and shame!  
Sore heart, so stopped when it at last beat high,  
Sad life, cut short just as its triumph came.

A deed accurst! Strokes have been struck before  
By the assassin's hand, whereof men doubt  
If more horror or disgrace they bore;  
But thy foul crime, like Cain's, stands darkly out.

Vile hand, that brandest murder on a strife,  
Whate'er its grounds, stoutly and nobly striven;  
And with the martyr's crown crownest a life  
With much to praise, little to be forgiven!

## CHAPTER XX

### THE LESSONS OF LINCOLN

**A**ND now what can we say of the lessons of Lincoln's life? Many books have been written about him—more probably than about any other American who ever lived. Men who knew him in his life have set down their recollections. Others who never saw him in the flesh have studied the records of his life and have written what they saw there. Some have tried to explain him; others have declared that he could not be explained, that he was alone, unique, not only the greatest American, but the hardest to understand.

It is only a little over sixty years since he died, but in that short time there has grown up around him a mist of myth and legend, through which it is hard to see that wise, patient, kind, enduring face.

But there are a few things that we can be sure of. One is that Lincoln, though born in poverty, was not what is still called in the South a poor white. His father was a landowner before Abraham was born

and continued to be a landowner through his life. To be sure, he was born in a log-cabin and lived in one until he was grown. But that was the day of the log-cabin. Practically all the people in the communities in which he lived were born in log-cabins. Only in the older regions were there sawmills for the making of lumber. For many years after frame houses became common, the beams and sills were still hewn with adze or broad-axe out of forest trees.

Lincoln had little education as we see it to-day. By this we mean that he had little schooling. That was because there were few schoolhouses in that pioneer land. Lincoln himself estimated that he had no more than a year in all. Teachers were few and uncertain. But education comes in many ways. It comes most of all from within ourselves.

If we desire to know, not all the handicaps in the world can keep us from an education. If we lack that desire, not even Harvard, Oxford, and Heidelberg rolled into one can do any more than fill us with useless facts.

Lincoln had one of the most useful qualities that the good fairies can confer on the sons of men: he wanted to know. Wherever he could find a man who could teach him something that he did not know before, he sought him out and talked with him. We

hear of him while still a youth in Indiana telling his comrades that the world did not really stand still, but moved around the sun. He explained that the moon did not in reality grow smaller and then larger from week to week, but that the shadow of the earth made it seem so. We see him walking six miles to borrow a grammar and studying hours at a time till he had absorbed what it had to tell him.

He read Weems's *Life of Washington*, till he knew it from front to back. There are probably few worse biographies in the world than this, but it served Lincoln's need of the hour,—it told him what he wanted to know about that great general of the Revolution and the first President. He read *Æsop's Fables* and made his own the wisdom that is packed into those stories told centuries ago by a crippled slave.

Two hundred and fifty years ago a wandering tinker lay in an English jail and thought his thoughts of the perils and triumphs of human life. This was John Bunyan, and out of his thoughts, in that foul jail, grew one of the immortal books—*Pilgrim's Progress*. Young Lincoln found this book in a backwoods cabin and it, too, gave him further light in his darkness, something more with which to feed that hungry brain of his.

It is not enough merely to read books. That ex-

ercise may easily be a form of mental laziness. Books bring us their message, to be sure, but it is what we bring to them that counts even more. Lincoln was curious about life, curious to know how men thought and lived; to know what it was that moved them to action.

Not books alone, but men were his study. Read the books that have been written about him and see how over and over he brought to the consideration of some serious problem an amusing anecdote of men and things. Many people misunderstood this habit of his. They said: "The President jokes about things that are too serious for joking. He tells funny stories when he should be spending the time in serious thought."

Presently they began to realize that many of these funny stories threw more light on the subject than could be found in many hours of solemn talk. He knew, too, that the minds of men need relief, that no one can stand the burden of endless seriousness without growing stale and tired. They laughed at Lincoln's story and then turned to their discussion with fresh energy. It was not until later that they came to realize that the refreshing of their energy had come from the few minutes' relaxation over the story.

And there were times, many times, when, as Lin-

coln himself said once, he had to choose between laughing and crying. At one time, after one of the great disasters, he said that he felt like the boy who had stubbed his toe and said that it hurt too much for laughing and he was too big to cry. Such a story gave a picture of his feeling more clearly than could have been conveyed in many more serious words.

All through his administration there were plenty of people who thought they knew more than the President about the right way of running the government and winning the war. They called on him singly and in shoals, they wrote letters, to him and to the newspapers, they made speeches, and they preached. They filled the air with the noise they made and they wearied the President with their clamor and their protests. He could not shut himself away from them and he could not entirely close his ears to the voices. When he could do nothing else, he turned them aside with a story and a laugh.

An Illinois friend called on him at the White House, one day, when he was more than ordinarily afflicted with these annoying advisers. Thought of them moved him to tell his friend of a farmer in Illinois who had been much disturbed by the croaking of the frogs in a marsh near where he lived.

Finally he went to a merchant in a near-by town and made him an offer.

"There are at least ten million frogs in that marsh near me," said the farmer, "an' I'll just arrest a couple of carloads of 'em an' hand them over to you. You can send them to the big cities an' make lots of money for both of us. Frogs' legs are a great delicacy in the big towns, an' not very plentiful. It won't take me more'n two or three days to pick 'em. They make so much noise my family can't sleep, an' by this deal, I'll get rid of a nuisance an' gather in some cash."

The merchant thought well of the idea and agreed to take the frogs. A couple of weeks later, the farmer walked into the store, carrying a small basket and looking very weary. He threw the basket on the counter. "There's your frogs," he said. The merchant remarked that it was a very small basket to hold two carloads of frogs, and the man replied that there weren't that many frogs in the whole world.

Then the merchant reminded him that he said that there were at least ten million frogs in the marsh.

"Well," said the farmer, "accordin' to the noise they made, there was, I thought, a hundred million of 'em, but when I had waded an' swum that there marsh day an' night fer two blessed weeks, I couldn't

harvest but six. There's two or three left yet, an' the marsh is as noisy as it uster be. We haven't ketched up on any of our lost sleep yet. Now you can have these here six, an' I won't charge you a cent fer 'em."

The President told this story and remarked dryly that you couldn't always tell from the noise they made how many people there were. The man who listened never had any doubt after that as to what the President meant.

Near the end of the war, certain prominent Southerners met the President and Secretary Seward for a conference on a steamer near Hampton Roads. By this time, they were becoming convinced that the South was beaten and that the war was near its end. The Southerners were much disturbed over the future of the Negro. He has known nothing but slavery, they said. He has worked only under the watchful eye of the overseer. If now we turn him loose to work or not as he chooses, he will not work, but he will be a nuisance and a menace to everybody else. The President waited for Secretary Seward to reply to this argument but the secretary apparently had nothing to say. Then the President told one of his stories.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Life of Abraham Lincoln*, by William E. Barton.

"I can only say, in reply to your statement of the case," he said to the Southerner who had advanced this argument, "that it reminds me of a man out in Illinois by the name of Case, who undertook a few years ago to raise a very large herd of hogs. It was a great trouble to feed them, and how to get around this was a puzzle to him. At length he hit on the plan of planting an immense field of potatoes, and, when they were sufficiently grown, he turned the whole herd into the field and let them have full swing, thus saving not only the labor of feeding the hogs, but also that of digging the potatoes.

"Charmed with his sagacity, he stood one day leaning against the fence counting his hogs when a neighbor came along.

"'Well, well,' said he, 'Mr. Case, this is all very fine. Your hogs are doing very well just now, but you know out here in Illinois the frost comes early, and the ground freezes for a foot deep. Then what are you going to do?'

"This was a view of the matter which Mr. Case had not taken into account. Butchering time for hogs was 'way into December or January. He scratched his head and at length stammered, 'Well, it may come pretty hard on their snouts, but I don't see but that it will be root, hog, or die.' "

This story not only answered the objections of the Southerners to that particular angle of the emancipation of the Negro, but it gave the country a new phrase. You may still hear men say, "Root, hog, or die." When you hear it you will know what they mean. And you may be very sure that the Southerners understood Lincoln.

Another great quality of Lincoln was his patience. He knew that things done hastily are seldom done well. We have seen how slowly he made up his mind about slavery. He was born in a slave state. Many of his relatives were friendly to the cause of the South. The political party to which he first belonged had little to say one way or another about slavery.

When here and there in the North men began to propose complete abolition, he was very slow to accept the idea. In fact, it is doubtful if he was ever sympathetic with the position of the extreme Abolitionists. It was his own plan that the government should buy the slaves from their masters and set them free. Yet when he made up his mind that the slaves must be freed if the Union was to stand in the right light before the other governments of the world, nothing could move him from his decision.

When he entered the White House, he had few

theories of how the country should be governed or the war should be fought.

He knew one thing sure—that the Union must be preserved. When men urged him to “let the erring sisters depart in peace,” he, almost alone among the statesmen of the day, knew that peace could never be won in that way. He was patient with his generals. There was for a time general agreement that McClellan was the best that the country offered. Lincoln tried him and waited. McClellan demanded more men. The country gave them to him. Still Lincoln waited. He knew in time the man would be found. Until he was sure that he had found the general who could lead the way to victory, it was better to cling to evils that he knew than fly to other and perhaps greater ones.

Finally his eye fell on Grant. Here was the man he had waited for. Here was a man who would fight with what he had, and if he failed, remake his armies and fight again. Grant had few powerful friends. He had many critics. Men besieged the President and urged him to try someone else. But at last Lincoln had found his man.

“He doesn’t write letters; he fights,” he said. And that was the final answer. The President’s patience had been rewarded. In the year in which Grant

commanded the Army of the Potomac the slaughter made the country gasp with horror, but the President sent still more men to fill the gaps in the ranks, and the end was the capture of Richmond and the surrender of Lee at Appomattox.

But above all other qualities in the great President stands out his ability to endure. The material of which he was made was tough fiber. Generations of pioneers had gone to the making of that strong body and stronger mind. When other men lost their heads and ran in circles, not knowing which way to turn, he stood fast. The course that he must follow was as plain to him as a turnpike road.

After the first defeat at Bull Run, the North was in panic. The enemy was within easy march of the capital of the country. A few hours might see the rebel flag flying over the White House. Lincoln knew that the war had only begun. He knew the temper of the North and the South. Southerners believed that the men of the North were interested only in making money and that they had no stomach for a hard fight. Lincoln knew himself and he knew his countrymen.

Many men in the North thought that the war talk of the South was brag and bluster. Again Lincoln knew the mistake. He knew that there was grim

purpose behind the loud boasting. North and South were of the same race and the same temper. If one was in earnest, so was the other.

The death of Lincoln just at the end of the war was a tragedy for the South, even more than for the North. The Southerners had fought to exhaustion. Their country had been devastated by invading armies. Cities had been burned and great stretches of their territory laid waste. Their slaves had been taken from them and they had no labor for their plantations, or money with which to pay wages if they could have found the labor. Many of their young men had been killed or wounded in battle; thousands of families were without support.

Then, if ever, in this country there was need of that mercy that tempers justice. Whatever might be said about the leaders who had drawn them into the long, killing struggle, the common soldiers who had fought with unfailing courage should have been given every chance to go back to their farms and begin again to build up their homes. Lincoln undoubtedly saw the need of this, and if he had lived the country would have been spared the long misery into which the South was plunged after the war was over.

Corrupt politicians, called carpet-baggers because

they carried all their possessions in an old-fashioned satchel known as a carpet-bag, held all the offices in the South. For many years, the South was governed by armies when it should have been governing itself. Dishonest men sought their own profit instead of doing justice and keeping order. Lincoln had dealt with self-seeking politicians before and knew their tricks. He had the confidence of the North and he was practically the only Northerner whom the South trusted.

Andrew Johnson who succeeded to the Presidency after the death of Lincoln was unpopular, narrow-minded, quick-tempered, and lacking in ability to live on good terms with those who disagreed with him. Almost from the day he took office he was involved in a long quarrel with Congress. His influence, small at the best, was soon utterly gone, and the South was delivered over to the rule of corruption and selfishness. This was not the least of the sorrows that the death of Lincoln brought on the country.

Over sixty years have passed since Lincoln died. There are few men now living who saw him face to face. The great armies that marched to battle at his command have dwindled to a few, tottering, feeble old men. The country for which he gave his life as surely as did any soldier who died on the field of

battle has grown beyond the expectations of men in size and in wealth.

There are few pioneers now, and great cities stand where there were scattering houses and villages in Lincoln's time. But we still have need for men of the Lincoln make and stature, simple, direct, honest, wise. And for our inspiration in time of trial, rich and powerful as we are, we still must turn to the story of Lincoln, rail-splitter, backwoods lawyer, friend of all good men, martyred President, the First American.

THE END











